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A Complete Edition of the Poets of GREAT BRITAIN.

Volume the First.

Containing

Chaucer, Surrey, Wyatt & Sackville.

LONDON.

Printed for John & Arthur Arch, *23. Gracechurch Street.*

and for Bell & Bradfute & I Mundell & Co *Edinburgh.*

THE

WORKS

OF THE

BRITISH POETS.

WITH

PREFACES,

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,

BY ROBERT ANDERSON, M. D.

VOLUME FIRST;

Containing

CHAUCER, SURREY, ‖ WYAT, SACKVILLE,

AND A GLOSSARY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN & ARTHUR ARCH; AND FOR BELL & BRADFUTE, AND J. MUNDELL & CO. EDINBURGH.

1795.

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PREFACE.

When a new collection of Engliſh Poetry is offered to the public, it will doubtleſs be inquired what are the deficiencies of preceding collections, which another editor may hope to ſupply.

On referring back to the ſeveral publications of this kind, which have exerciſed the abilities of other perſons; the reader will ſee on what ground the editor judged the work, which he now preſents to the world, to be neceſſary.

Engliſh literature is undoubtedly under no ſmall obligations to thoſe who have aſſociated the ſcattered productions of our poets in one collection, and by that means have ſecured their general preſervation.

Tottell, editor of the "Songes and Sonnettes" of Surrey, Wyat, and of "Uncertain Auctors," 1557, the firſt printed Poetical Miſcellany in the Engliſh language; Allot, editor of "England's Parnaſſus," 1600; Bodenham, editor of "Belvidere, or the Garden of the Muſes," 1600; and the anonymous editors of the "Paradiſe of Daintie Deviſes," 1578; and "England's Helicon," 1600; have preſerved many admirable ſpecimens of ancient genius, which would have mouldered in manuſcript, or perhaps, from their detached and fugitive ſtate of exiſtence, their want of length, the capriciouſneſs of taſte, the general depredations of time, inattention, and other accidents, would never have reached the preſent age.

Mrs. Cooper, in her "Muſes Library," 1737; Mr. Hayward, in his "Britiſh Muſe," 1738; Mr. Capel in his "Proluſions," 1740; Dr. Percy in his "Reliques," 1765; Mr. Evans, in his "Old Ballads," 1777; Mr. Headley, in his "Beauties of Ancient Engliſh Poetry," 1787; and Mr. Ritſon, in his "Ancient Songs," 1789, followed the ſame plan, in conſequence of which many valuable pieces are reſcued from oblivion, that, from their brevity and unconnectedneſs, could not poſſibly have ſurvived for any length of time by themſelves; and many judicious ſelections are made, from an attentive peruſal of antique and obſolete writers, which exhibit complete and ſatisfactory ſpecimens of their different modes of writing.

The collections of a ſimilar nature, formed by Daviſon, Dryden, Fenton, Steele, Pope, Pemberton, Lintot, C. Tooke, Dodſley, Fawkes, Donaldſon, Pearch and Nichols, contain an infinite number of ſmall poems, many of which muſt be allowed to poſſeſs conſiderable merit; being the productions of men of real genius, who, from the brevity, rather than the inferiority of their writings, have been uſually ſtyled "Minor Poets."

A degree of praiſe not much inferior to that which the above compilers have acquired, is due to editors, who, uniting induſtry with taſte, have preſented the public with uniform and elegant editions of the Works of the Britiſh Poets, in the manner of thoſe of Italy, Spain, and France.

The firſt collection of Engliſh Poetry which appeared in theſe kingdoms, was formed by Dr. Blair, and printed at Edinburgh, in 42 vols. 12mo. 1773, for Meſſrs. Creech and Balfour, booksellers, containing the works of Milton, Cowley, Butler, Dryden, Waller, Garth, Prior, Addiſon, Parnell, Pope, Gay, Swift, Young, Thomſon, Shenſtone, Gray, and Lyttleton. The elegance of this edition is no compenſation for its incompletneſs. The contracted liſt of authors marked out by Dr. Blair, includes none of thoſe who have juſtly obtained the diſtinction of being denominated our older claſſics, except Milton and Cowley. Nor do the contents of the work correſpond with its title, many long and valuable pieces of Cowley, Parnell, Swift, and Shenſtone, being omitted in the collection of their reſpective works. This mode of publiſhing modern works of credit, the contents of

which happen to be unequal, unleſs immediately intended for the uſe of ſchools, does but multiply books to no good end. By anticipating him, it deprives the reader of that pleaſure which every one feels, and of that right which every one is entitled to, of judging for himſelf. Cowley, Parnell, Swift, and Shenſtone, are far too well known to ſtand in need of ſuch partial recommendation, and, in fact, hold a moſt diſtinguiſhed rank in the "ſchool of the people."

In 1776, a Collection of Engliſh Poetry, upon a more extenſive plan, was undertaken by Mr. Bell, bookſeller in London, to be printed by the Martins, at the Apollo Preſs, Edinburgh, in 109 miniature volumes, ornamented with engravings, containing the entire works of the authors admitted into Dr. Blair's edition, and the works of Chaucer, Spenſer, Donne, Denham, Roſcommon, Buckingham, Lanſdown, King, Pomfret, Congreve, Rowe, Watts, J. Philips, Smith, Hughes, Fenton, Tickell, Somervile, Broome, Savage, Pitt, A. Philips, Dyer, G. Weſt, Hammond, Collins, Moore, Armſtrong, R. Weſt, Mallet, Cunningham, and Churchill. The works of the ſeveral authors were publiſhed ſeparately, without any regard to chronological order, and at long intervals, ſome of the later volumes being printed at London in 1787. In this edition, three of our older claſſics appear, to whom no place had been given in Dr. Blair's edition, and ſeveral modern writers of credit are adopted as legitimate and eſtabliſhed poets. Such, however, is the fate of the work, that we ſeldom ſee it entire, but meet with its contents wandering ſeparately, and diſjointed in every catalogue.

In 1779, while Mr. Bell's publication was going forward, the London bookſellers publiſhed a collection of the "Works of the Engliſh Poets," in 60 vols. ſmall 8vo, with Prefaces Biographical and Critical, by Dr. Johnſon, and heads engraved by Bartolozzi, &c.

The following account of this undertaking, as given by Mr. Edward Dilly, in a letter to Mr. Boſwell, dated, Southill, Sept. 26. 1777, will not be unentertaining to thoſe who delight in tracing the progreſs of works of literature; ſince it was the occaſion of procuring for us an elegant collection of the beſt biography and criticiſm of which our language can boaſt.

"The edition of the Poets now printing will do honour to the Engliſh preſs, and a conciſe account of the life of each author by Dr. Johnſon, will be a very valuable addition, and ſtamp the reputation of this edition, ſuperior to any thing that is gone before. The firſt cauſe that gave riſe to this undertaking, I believe, was owing to the little trifling edition of the Poets printing by the Martins, at Edinburgh, and to be ſold by Bell in London. Upon examining the volumes which were printed, the type was found ſo extremely ſmall, that many perſons could not read them: Not only this inconvenience attended it, but the inaccuracy of the preſs was very conſpicuous. Theſe reaſons, as well as the idea of an invaſion of what we call our Literary Property, induced the London bookſellers to print an elegant and accurate edition of *all the Engliſh Poets of reputation, from Chaucer to the preſent time.*

"Accordingly a ſelect number of the moſt reſpectable bookſellers met on the occaſion, and, conſulting together, agreed, that all the proprietors of copy-right in the various poets, ſhould be ſummoned together, and when their opinions were given, to proceed immediately to buſineſs. Accordingly a meeting was held, conſiſting of about forty of the moſt reſpectable bookſellers of London, when it was agreed, that an elegant and uniform edition of "The Engliſh Poets" ſhould be immediately printed, with a conciſe account of the life of each author, by Dr. Samuel Johnſon; and that three perſons ſhould be deputed to wait upon Dr. Johnſon, to ſolicit him to undertake the Lives, viz. T. Davies, Strahan, and Cadell. The Doctor very politely undertook it, and ſeemed exceedingly pleaſed with the propoſal. As to the terms, it was left entirely to the Doctor to name his own; he mentioned two hundred guineas; it was immediately agreed to, and a farther compliment, I believe, will be made him. A committee was likewiſe appointed to engage the beſt engravers, viz. Bartolozzi, Sherwin, Hall, &c.; likewiſe another committee for giving directions about the paper, printing, &c.: ſo that the whole will be conducted with ſpirit, and in the beſt manner, with reſpect to authorſhip, editorſhip, engravings, &c. &c. My brother will give you a liſt of the Poets we mean to give, many of which are within the time of the act of Queen Anne, which Martin and Bell cannot give, as they have no property in them; the proprietors are almoſt all the bookſellers in London, of conſequence."

The plan of this edition, ſo happily conceived, was more ample than the execution. Inſtead of comprehending "all the Engliſh poets of reputation from Chaucer to the preſent time," it was unaccountably limited to a liſt of *fifty-three* authors, beginning with Cowley and ending with Lyttleton; all of whom appear in Mr. Bell's edition, except Rocheſter, Otway, Dorſet, Stepney, Walſh, Duke, Sprat, Halifax, and Blackmore; who are diſplaced, to make room for Chaucer, Spenſer, Donne, Armſtrong, R. Weſt, Cunningham, and Churchill.

The managers of this edition are liable to ſome cenſure, for admitting ſo few of our older claſſics in a work which bore ſo cloſe a relation to the honour of the nation, and which, from its elegance and magnitude, afforded the happieſt opportunity of uniting our poets, both ancient and modern, in one comprehenſive view, and of combining their reſpective excellencies in one common intereſt. Ancient poetry, in thus being exhibited to the public eye, would ſoon have made good her claims to notice, and of herſelf recovered the long-loſt verdure of her bays; whilſt the juſtice of that latitude which is commonly aſſigned to later improvements, from a fair opportunity of a comparative examination, might have been more ſtrictly aſcertained.

It is well known, that the oſtenſible editor was ever glad to eſcape the cenſure which the work had fallen under, by alleging, that, with the exception of Pomfret, Yalden, Blackmore, and Watts, he had nothing to do with the ſelection; he had engaged himſelf only to furniſh a ſet of Lives to ſuch a liſt as the bookſellers, who were the reſponſible publiſhers of the work, ſhould think proper.

Dr. Johnſon gave up his life to the literature of his country; a portion of it would not have been thrown away, had it been dedicated to the completion of ſuch an undertaking. In the eſteem of the bookſellers, he ſtood very high, perhaps higher than any man of his age, and there cannot be a doubt, but that the management of the work, on the leaſt deſire intimated by him, would have been veſted in his hands, with the utmoſt gratitude and confidence.

As the matter ſtands, it is difficult to gueſs the reaſon why the managers of this edition admitted ſome authors, while others of ſimilar character were rejected. In an edition of poetry, where ſome of the "wits of Charles's days, the mob of gentlemen who wrote with eaſe," and the heroes of the "Dunciad," are to be found, we rather wonder at not finding others; where Rocheſter, Roſcommon, Sprat, Halifax, Stepney, and Duke, were received, why Carew, Sedley, Hopkins, Marvell, and Oldham, were refuſed, one is puzzled to gueſs; and where Pomfret, Yalden, and Blackmore, are preferred to Euſden, Welſted, and Hill, it is not eaſy to account for the preference. When the publication was undertaken, Armſtrong and Langhorne, poets of ſuperior rank, were living; their works, conſequently, could not be properly inſerted; but Churchill, Smart, and Goldſmith, were dead, and their works certainly had a juſt claim to admiſſion.

When Dr. Johnſon engaged to furniſh the bookſellers with a "Preface" to the works of each author, it was his intention to have allotted to each poet, an "Advertiſement" like thoſe which are found in the French Miſcellanies, containing a few dates and a general character. That he was led beyond his intention, "by the honeſt deſire of giving uſeful pleaſure," will be always a ſubject of congratulation to every reader of taſte. That he paſſed ſome partial judgments in his "Lives," that he was ſometimes blinded by prejudice, that he occaſionally ſaw through the medium of party or religion; and that, without the taſte which would enable him to decide, he raſhly determined from abſtract reaſoning, and the examination of a philoſopher, where philoſophy was an inadequate judge, muſt be allowed: But, as fine pieces of nervous writing, pregnant with valuable detached opinions, happy illuſtrations, nice diſcuſſions, and a variety of curious incidental information, they will ever be regarded as the richeſt, moſt beautiful, and, indeed, moſt perfect production of his pen.

In 1790, a new edition of this elegant collection was publiſhed, in 75 volumes 8vo, which gave the proprietors an opportunity of adding the works of Moore, Cawthorne, Churchill, Falconer, Lloyd, Cunningham, Green, Goldſmith, P. Whitehead, Armſtrong, Langhorne, Johnſon, W. Whitehead, and Jenyns; and of ſupplying ſome deficiencies in the works of the authors printed in the former edition.

"Of the authors now firſt added," ſays the Advertiſement, "ſome are inſerted, in compliance with the repeated calls of the public; ſome, in deference to the opinions of perſons whoſe taſte cannot be diſputed; and ſome have found a place from the favourable ſentiments expreſſed concerning them to the publiſhers, from various quarters. In this ſelection, the proprietors have not been in-

fluenced by any partiality of their own towards the authors ſelected; they have endeavoured to obtain the beſt opinions, and they have implicitly followed them."

This edition is ſuperior to the former, both in elegance and magnitude, and reflects much honour on the taſte and liberality of the proprietors; but it is equally deficient in the works of our older claſſics, and affords ſimilar inſtances of caprice in the admiſſion to literary honours.

As it was thought neceſſary to admit P. Whitehead and Jenyns, it ſeems reaſonable to expect that ſome reaſon had been given for ſhowing them a diſtinction which has been denied to Wilkie, Grainger, Smollet and Scott, and above all, to the immortal Spenſer.

Of the *fourteen* authors added to the former liſt of Engliſh claſſics, conciſe accounts are given, upon Dr. Johnſon's original plan; which, happily for both himſelf and his readers, he relinquiſhed; as it would have conferred not much reputation on the writer, nor have communicated much information to his readers. Accordingly, a few dates and facts are only ſet down, in the manner of the French *Notices Literaires*, with occaſionally a general character.

When ſuch inconſiderable advances towards bringing forward to notice the older poets, were made by thoſe who, from their ſituation and influence, were beſt ſuited to the taſk; when our great poetical biographer was not only remiſs in reſtoring them to popularity, but, by his neglect and ſilence, ſeemed to inſinuate they were undeſerving of it; the ſolicitude of the preſent editor for their fate, and the attempt now made by him to do them that juſtice which has been denied them by his predeceſſors, can require no apology.

In 1792, Mundell and Son, printers in Edinburgh, having reſolved to republiſh the Collection of Engliſh poetry, which goes under the name of Dr. Johnſon, in the manner of Dr. Knox's "Elegant Extracts in Verſe," in *ſix volumes* large octavo, he took occaſion to recommend a collection, upon an enlarged plan, which might unite the works of the ancient and modern poets in one comprehenſive view, and exhibit the progreſs of our national poetry, correſponding with the gradual refinement of language and of manners, from the rudeneſs and ſimplicity of a remote period, to the poliſh and elegance of modern times.

The proprietors, with a liberal ſpirit of enterpriſe, worthy of an aſſociation of opulent bookſellers, readily adopted the plan he recommended, though with ſome limitations as to the ancient poetry, and reſolved to extend their collection to *twelve volumes*, upon his promiſing to furniſh them with a *Biographical and Critical Preface* to the works of each author; an undertaking in which he engaged with more raſhneſs than prudence, amidſt cares and avocations of a far different and more important nature, and without a ſuitable proviſion of materials.

The liſt of the works of the older poets, which he originally recommended for republication, comprehended thoſe of Chaucer, *Langland*, *Gower*; the beſt parts of *Lydgate*, *Barclay*, *Hawes*; the beſt parts of *Skelton*, Surrey, Wyat; the beſt parts of *Warner*, *Sydney*, Sackville, Spenſer, *Marlow*, Davies, Shakſpeare, Drayton, Daniel, Jonſon, Donne, Hall, Drummond, *Stirling*, Browne, P. Fletcher, G. Fletcher; the beſt parts of *Quarles*, *King*, Carew, Suckling, Craſhaw, Davenant, and the tranſlations of *Fairfax*, *Sandys*, and *May*. The works of the authors printed in Italics were, on due conſideration, omitted; it being thought ſafer to allure curioſity into this unfrequented track of reading, by a republication of the works of thoſe authors, who, though not either univerſally read or underſtood (as muſt ever be the caſe with the beſt elder poets of every country), are notwithſtanding familiar to us in converſation, and conſtantly appealed to in controverted points of poetical taſte, than to run the riſk of ſuppreſſing it totally, by a bulky republication of all or the better parts of the works of thoſe unfortunate authors, who ſtill remain unpopular, merely from the want of being read. The claſſical compoſitions of Barbour, James I, Henry the Minſtrel, Dunbar, Douglas and Lindſay, being written in the Scottiſh language, could not be received into an edition of Engliſh poetry.

The liſt of the works of the modern poets which he originally recommended for republication, comprehended the works of *Marvell*, *C. Cotton*, *Sedley*, *Hopkins*, *Oldham*, Pattiſon, Hill, *Euſden*, *Weſtled*, *Sewell*, Blair, Hamilton, Harte, Boyſe, Thompſon, Cooper, Brown, Grainger, Smollet, Wilkie, Dodſley, *Mendez*, *Jenner*, *Kirkpatrick*, Smart, Bruce, Chatterton, Græme, Glover, Shaw, Lovibond, Penroſe, Mickle, Jago, Scott, Logan, N. Cotton, and Blacklock. He was afterwards obliged to abridge this liſt, and to exclude the authors printed in Italics, on account of the arrangements which the proprietors had made relative to the extent of the collection.

Notwithſtanding theſe limitations, which, on the part of the editor, were unavoidable, it is with ſome degree of confidence, that he offers to public inſpection a Collection of Engliſh poetry, which contains the works of *one hundred and fourteen* authors, of whom *forty-nine* are not to be found in the the laſt edition of the "Works of the Engliſh Poets," commonly called Dr. Johnſon's edition; and *forty-five* are now, for the firſt time, received into an edition of Engliſh poetry.

In the works of the authors already collected, eſpecially the later authors, ſome deficiencies have been ſupplied in the preſent edition. In the works of *Langhorne*, in particular, the additions are numerous and important. They are ſuch as a reader of Engliſh poetry will readily diſtinguiſh, and therefore unneceſſary to be pointed out.

Though the editor has exerted himſelf with conſiderable attention, to render the works of the authors now firſt collected, as complete as poſſible; yet copies of Surrey's tranſlation of the *ſecond* and *fourth* books of the *Æneid*, Davies's *Epigrams*, P. Fletcher's Latin and Engliſh poem on the *Jeſuits* and *Sicilides*, a Piſcatory drama, Harte's *Eſſay on Reaſon*, Shaw's *Four Farthing Candles*, Brown's *Liberty*, and ſome pieces of other authors, have eluded his diligence. The works of Chatterton might have been enlarged by additions from Mr. Barret's "Hiſtory of Briſtol," and "Supplement to Chatterton's Miſcellanies," which could not be obtained in due time. Gray's *Sonnet on Sir William Williams*, Mickle's *Prophecy of Queen Emma*, Johnſon's *Marmor Norfolcienſe*, and ſome other little pieces, happened to be overlooked at the preſs.

The editor does not wiſh to be underſtood as having performed more than he has actually done. For the ſelection of the authors, he is ſolely reſponſible. What pleaſed himſelf he has ventured to recommend to others; a taſk of ſuch difficulty requires the candid allowance of the reader, for the unavoidable differences of taſte and judgment. The recommendation of the proper editions of the works to be reprinted, belonged to the editor; with the exception of the works of *Chaucer*, in the *firſt* volume, and the works of the ſeveral authors in the *fifth* volume, in which he had no concern.

For the correctneſs of the text, he is not anſwerable, as he had no concern in the reviſion of any part of theſe volumes, except the *Biographical and Critical Prefaces*, and occaſionally ſome *additions*, *notes*, and *illuſtrations* in the courſe of the work. The chronological arrangement which he recommended has not been ſtrictly obſerved, on account of the proportion which it was thought neceſſary to obſerve, in the ſize of the volumes. The engraved title-page, bearing to be "A *Complete* Edition of the Poets of Great Britain," was improperly copied by the proprietors, in the *firſt* volume, from Mr. Bell's edition, and retained in the ſubſequent volumes, for the ſake of uniformity.

In ſo complicated and extenſive a work, typographical errors may be expected to occur. The editor hopes they are not very numerous, and will, he thinks, be entitled to the pardon of every candid reader. Several miſtakes of this kind, he is ſorry to acknowledge, remain uncorrected in his part of the work, particularly in the Lives of *Wilkie*, *Johnſon*, and ſome others in the *eleventh* volume, which he deſires may be attributed, not to neglect, but want of experience in affairs of this nature, and to the precipitation with which the work proceeded through the preſs; all the *Prefaces* having been written in little more than two years, and ſent to the preſs, in portions, as they were wanted, without any previous reviſion.

There is one alteration in the preſent collection which the editor believes will need no apology. This is the arrangement of the poetical tranſlations of entire works in a ſeparate volume. To render the works of Homer and Pindar more complete, Mr. Hole's *Hymn to Ceres*, and Mr. Pye's *Six Olympic Odes*, are added to the tranſlations of Pope and Weſt; and the deficiencies in Dryden's Juvenal are ſupplied by the verſions of thoſe who were originally aſſociated with him in that performance. A ſupplemental volume of Tranſlations, making the *thirteenth*, has been printed, and another is ſtill wanting to complete the arrangement, with a volume of Fugitive Poetry.

Of the Lives here offered to the public, nearly one half have been already written by Dr. Johnſon, with ſuch felicity of performance, that the editor might perhaps more properly have contented himſelf with ſubjoining a few corrections and additions to his elegant narratives; but that new Lives were thought neceſſary to the uniformity of this collection.

As the undertaking was occaſional and unforeſeen, Dr. Johnſon muſt be ſuppoſed to have engaged in it with leſs proviſion of materials than might have been accumulated by longer premeditation.

Of the later writers, at leaſt, he might, by attention and inquiry, have gleaned many particulars which would have diverſified and enlivened his biography; but he was not actuated by an enthuſiaſm for his employment. He could not encounter wearineſs, perplexity, and diſguſt. The labour of literature was a taſk from which he always wiſhed to eſcape. From Spence's Collections, communicated by the Duke of Newcaſtle, he received great aſſiſtance. In what he relates, though there is, in many articles, little, except the manner in which it is told, that is new (a deficiency which was not always in his power to remedy), yet his narration affords a luminous proof of the vigour of his mind in all its faculties, whether memory, judgment, or imagination. What he has to ſay on every ſubject is always worth hearing. Though the turn of his mind cannot be conſidered as peculiarly qualifying him for a critic of ſubjects which require more imagination than judgment, yet the luſtre of his great mind ſeldom beamed on any thing, without lighting us to ſome new truth, latent trait of character, or peculiarity hitherto unobſerved. Even the acrimony of his poetical cenſures, is, in a great meaſure, compenſated by the force and originality of his reflections, and the elegance and correctneſs of his language.

In the preſent undertaking, the editor has not the preſumption to ſuppoſe himſelf qualified to complete what Dr. Johnſon has left unfiniſhed, nor the temerity to court a compariſon. Neither the ſtyle nor the manner are here the principal object of attention. With a view to popular information, he has endeavoured to collect what is diffuſed, to glean in ſpots which have been ſometimes neglected, and ſometimes forgotten, and to relate with clearneſs and ſimplicity, what is known of the perſonal hiſtory and literary productions of each author, whoſe works are aſſociated in this collection, digeſted in the form of a chronicle, ſubjoining an eſtimate of his character, a critical examination of his compoſitions, and, by quotation, the teſtimonies of contemporary writers, and the judgments of the moſt reſpectable critics.

In the courſe of this undertaking, he has endeavoured to avail himſelf of the various biographical collections already in the hands of the public. Of theſe collections, it was neceſſary to form a right idea, to ſelect from them whatever was conducive to his deſign, and carefully to avoid their errors, at the ſame time that he preſerved their excellencies. What uſe he has made of them will be obvious, as well as what is entirely his own.

In the Lives of the authors of a remote period, the inſtances are numerous which ſtand in need of emendations and corrections, for retrenching ſuperfluities, ſupplying deficiencies, and rectifying the miſtakes in dates and facts, which may unintentionally have been committed, and tranſmitted from writer to writer without examination. The editor has exerted himſelf, in this reſpect, with conſiderable attention.

In the Lives of the modern authors, eſpecially of thoſe lately deceaſed, of whom there are no written memorials, the difficulty under which the editor laboured will be evident; from the want of proper information, the prejudices of friends or admirers, the calumnies of enemies, and the ſuggeſtions of envy, to which eminent characters are peculiarly liable. Time overcomes moſt of theſe impediments, except the firſt, which it evidently, in many caſes, increaſes.

An accurate inveſtigation into the powers and varieties of the human mind, is of all ſtudies the moſt important; and a faithful narration of the principles, conduct, and writings of eminent men, might, perhaps, afford the ſureſt baſis for ſuch reſearches; but it is almoſt unreaſonable to expect from human intellect and virtue, ſufficient diſcernment, diſcrimination and impartiality, to qualify for ſo difficult and delicate a taſk.

As far as relates to himſelf, the editor has endeavoured, as much as poſſible, to relate the circumſtances of the Lives of the authors from the moſt authentic information, and to give an account of their writings with real impartiality. His aim has been to riſe above narrow prejudices, and to record the vices and virtues, the excellencies and defects of authors, with fidelity and freedom. The well-known adage, *de mortuis nil niſi bonum*, ſeems to have been dictated by tenderneſs and humanity. Errors are diminiſhed when once the grave has interpoſed, and the good qualities are proportionably magnified. The generous feelings add to the unwillingneſs to blame, and every liberal mind feels it an act of cowardice to attack thoſe who cannot defend themſelves. The beſt propenſities of the human mind are thus engaged to repel cenſure and invite praiſe. Without violating the rights of humanity, the wiſh of the editor has been to ſpeak of the dead with liberal, but not indiſcriminate

praiſe. Hence, truth, he truſts, will appear in its faireſt garb, and impartiality appear almoſt like praiſe.

In the repreſentation of facts, and the delineation of characters, the editor has endeavoured to do full juſtice to the conduct and principles of men of every profeſſion and party. But he apprehends that a philoſophical liberality of mind does not imply in it, that he has no ſentiments of his own. He ſcruples not to declare his attachment to the great intereſts of mankind, and his enmity to bigotry, ſuperſtition, and tyranny. A work of this nature, that is conducted without any regard to the chief privileges of human nature, without a philoſophical liberality of mind, and without feelings, eſpecially of the moral kind, would be deprived of much of its utility.

With reſpect to the ſtrictures on the works of the various authors, the editor is far from being over-anxious to make others adopt his ſentiments. If erroneous criticiſm may be ſometimes ſuſpected, who can hope that, in matters of taſte, all ſhall agree? He will think it ſufficient, if his remarks ſhould engage the reader to review his own opinions, or recal his attention to ſome latent beauty, ſome faſcinating line, or ſome happy expreſſion, which, on a firſt peruſal, had eſcaped him. Where he has preſumed to differ from the moſt reſpectable authorities, he would be rather underſtood to propoſe a doubt than to offer a contradiction. If his praiſes have been ſometimes, as he fears they have, too laviſhly beſtowed, he truſts, that the candid reader will aſcribe them to a ſolicitude which made him more willing to recommend beauties than to expoſe blemiſhes; rather earneſt to do juſtice to the author's merit, than to raiſe an admiration of his own judgment.

The obligations which the editor has received, have extended, in ſeveral caſes, to the communication of entire articles, and to occaſional aſſiſtance: For the life of *Spenſer*, and the lives of *Milton*, *Cowley*, *Waller*, *Butler*, and *Denham*, he is indebted to two gentlemen of learning and abilities, who have not indulged him with the liberty of mentioning their names. They were ſolicited and obtained by the proprietors, to expedite the publication, and never ſeen by the editor till they were printed. He knows not whether any apology will be deemed needful for inſerting them. They are compoſed, it muſt be acknowledged, with little care or diligence, and with a compendious brevity, which, though compatible with accuracy of narration, and vigour of deſcription, precludes a critical account both of events and writings. As theſe articles comprehend ſome of the firſt names in Engliſh poetry, it is the intention of the editor to write them over again, for a ſeparate edition of the Lives, corrected and enlarged, which it is in contemplation with the proprietors to publiſh.

With reſpect to occaſional aſſiſtance, the editor has been favoured with various biographical information concerning *Moore*, *Blair*, *Wilkie*, *Bruce*, and *Logan*, from the Rev. Mr. Toulmin of Taunton, the Rev. Dr. Robertſon of Dalmeny, the Rev. Dr. William Thomſon of London, the Rev. Dr. Blair, the Rev. Dr. Baird, the Rev. Dr. Hardy, and Profeſſor Dalzel of Edinburgh, to whom he begs leave to make his acknowledgments. To all theſe gentlemen he eſteems himſelf much indebted for their kindneſs and attention. From them ariſes the principal aſſiſtance he has to boaſt of. He has many reaſons to flatter himſelf, that his information would have been much enlarged from other quarters, if a diffidence of his abilities for the undertaking had not deterred him from ſolicitation.

The editor cannot conclude, without an apology to the reader, which he is ſorry to be under the neceſſity of making. In his endeavours to render theſe volumes worthy of attention, he has been thwarted by a ſituation peculiarly unfavourable for ſuch purſuits: the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge, the Britiſh Muſeum, the repoſitories, muſeums, and libraries of the curious, from whence only adequate materials are to be drawn, he has had no acceſs to. His chief reſource has been a ſmall private collection, and the libraries of the Univerſity, and of the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, neither of which is rich in old Engliſh literature.

The mention of theſe valuable repoſitories naturally reminds the editor, that he ſhould be deficient in gratitude, if he omitted to notice the readineſs with which he was allowed the free uſe of whatever they contained, for the ſervice of this work.

The communication of ſome ſcarce miſcellaneous collections, by Alexander Fraſer Tytler, Eſq. of Woodhouſelee, Robert Arbuthnot, Eſq. Secretary to the Truſtees for Fiſheries, Manufactures and and Improvements, and George Farquhar, Eſq. of South Frederick-Street, the editor conſiders as a favour worthy of public acknowledgment.

How far the preſent work is calculated to anſwer what the public has a right to demand, the editor is afraid to reflect on. It was begun ſolely from public conſiderations, without any regard to perſonal advantage, and has been carried on through many difficulties, much ill health, and with many real doubts of his ability to finiſh it in ſuch a manner as to merit applauſe. He has not been ſeduced by vanity, ſo far as not to perceive the many errors and defects which will be found in his part of theſe volumes. He is truly ſenſible of them; but can, at the ſame time, declare, they have not been cauſed by any relaxation of his endeavours to render the work as perfect as he was able, conſiſtent with his attention to more important avocations. Every work of this kind is, by its nature, deficient. To thoſe who may be diſſatisfied with the manner in which it is conducted, he can only ſay, that the undertaking appeared to him much eaſier, before he engaged in it, than he found afterwards in its progreſs through the preſs. He had but an imperfect conception of the difficulties to be ſurmounted, the diſappointments to be incurred, the books to be procured and waited for, the dates to be ſettled, the facts to be aſcertained, and the various irritating minutiæ of the preſs. He may ſafely rely on the candour of thoſe who have experienced the trouble and difficulty attending ſuch extenſive literary undertakings.

Whatever is the determination concerning it (though the ſubject is what he acknowledges himſelf to feel ſome anxiety about), the editor profeſſes himſelf not to have the ſlighteſt inclination to diſpute the propriety of any cenſure which may be paſſed on his labours, either in part or in the whole. Perfectly ſatisfied with the pleaſure he has received in the courſe of the work, he has no expectation of emolument, or wiſh for fame on account of his concern in it.

To do juſtice to neglected merit; to extend the honour of our national poetry, as far as poſſible, both abroad and at home; to enlarge, however little, the boundaries of literary biography and elegant criticiſm; to ſtrengthen and co-operate with the taſte for poetical antiquities, which, for ſome time paſt, has been conſiderably advancing; to hold out an incentive to the love of fame and the cultivation of the mind; to diverſify the materials of common reading, and to open freſh ſources of uſeful inſtruction and innocent amuſement, are ends which, though to attain be beyond his powers, the honeſt ambition of the editor is ſomething gratified by the attempt alone.

ROBERT ANDERSON.

EDINBURGH,
November 25. 1795.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER;

Containing

CANTERBURY TALES,
ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE,
TROILUS AND CRESEIDE,
THE COURT OF LOVE,
THE COMPLAINT OF PITE,
ANELIDA AND FALSE ARCITE,
THE ASSEMBLEE OF FOULES,
THE COMPLAINT OF THE BLACK KNIGHT,
THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESSE,
CHAUCER'S A, B, C,
THE HOUSE OF FAME,
CHAUCER'S DREME,
THE FLOUR AND THE LEFE,
THE LEGENDE OF GOODE WOMEN,
THE COMPLAINT OF MARS AND VENUS,
THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE,

&c. &c. &c.

To which is prefixed

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

Old CHAUCER, like the *morning ſtar*,
To us diſcovers day from far;
His light thoſe miſts and clouds diſſolv'd,
Which our dark nation long involv'd;
But he deſcending to the ſhades,
Darkneſs again the age invades.

DENHAM'S VERSES ON THE DEATH OF COWLEY.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY *MUNDELL AND SON*, ROYAL BANK CLOSE;

Anno 1793.

THE LIFE OF CHAUCER.

In the beginning of the eleventh century, our vernacular poetry received from the Normans, the rudiments of that cultivation which it has preſerved to the preſent times.

In the two ſucceeding centuries, the principal efforts of our yet untutored verſifiers, were rhyming chronicles and metrical romances, the ſtyle of which was rough, and the harmony of the numbers very defective.

In the reign of Edward I., the character of our poetical compoſition was conſiderably changed, by the introduction and increaſe of the tales of chivalry, and the popular fables of the troubadours of Provence.

Fictitious adventures were then ſubſtituted by the minſtrels in the place of hiſtorical and traditionary facts, and a taſte for ornamental and exotic expreſſion gradually prevailed over the rude ſimplicity of the native Engliſh phraſeology.

Theſe fabulous narratives, afterwards enlarged by kindred fancies, derived from the cruſades, and enriched by the marvellous machinery of the Italian poets, formed the taſte, and awakened the imagination of GEOFFREY CHAUCER, the illuſtrious ornament of the reign of Edward III. and of his ſucceſſor Richard II., the father of the Engliſh heroic verſe, and the firſt Engliſh verſifier who wrote poetically.

Of the great poet, with whoſe compoſitions this collection of claſſical Engliſh poetry commences, the curioſity which his reputation muſt excite, will require more ample information than can now be given. His contemporaries, who reverenced his genius, recorded few particulars of his life; and all who have ſince written of him, relate nothing beyond what caſual mention, uncertain tradition, and diſcordant conjecture, have ſupplied.

This meagre narration, therefore, ſcarcely merits the title that is given to it; but the materials for a fuller account are not to be found, without ſupplying the deficiency of facts by the comments and inventions of his biographers, which have nothing to recommend them to credit but the ſingle circumſtance of being often repeated.

The birth of Chaucer, in 1328, has been ſettled, from the inſcription on his tomb-ſtone, ſignifying that he died in 1400, in the 72d year of his age.

Of the place of his nativity there is no memorial, any more than of his parents. Bale ſays he was a Berkſhireman; Pits would entitle Woodſtock in Oxfordſhire to his birth; and Camden affirms that London was his birth-place: "Edmund Spenſer," ſays he, "a Londoner, was ſo ſmiled on by the Muſes at his birth, that he excelled all the Engliſh poets that went before him, if we except only his fellow citizen Chaucer." But Chaucer himſelf ſeems to have determined the point. In his *Teſtament of Love*, he calls himſelf a *Londonois* or Londoner, and ſpeaks of the city of London as the place of his *engendrure*.

His deſcent has been variouſly aſſigned. Leland ſays that he was of a noble ſtock; Pits, that he was the ſon of a knight; Speght, that his father was a vintner; and Hearne, that he was a merchant.

This difference of opinion ſhews, that nothing can be ſaid with any tolerable aſſurance of his family; but the patronymic name ſeems to indicate, that it came originally from Normandy; and there is ſomewhat more probability of his being the ſon of a gentleman rather than of a tradeſman.

His biographers are as much in the dark about the place of his education. They tell us that he received the rudiments of his education in Solere's Hall, Cambridge, where he wrote his *Court of Love*; and afterwards completed his ſtudies in Merton College, Oxford.

In his *Court of Love*, he ſpeaks of himſelf under the name and character of "Philogenet—of Cambridge, Clerk." This is by no means a deciſive proof that he was really educated at Cambridge; but it may be admitted as a ſtrong argument, that he was not educated at Oxford, as Leland has ſuppoſed, without the ſhadow of proof. The biographers, however, inſtead of weighing one of theſe accounts againſt the other, have adopted both, and tell us very gravely that he was firſt at Cambridge, and afterwards removed from thence to complete his education at Oxford.

After he left the univerſity, he is ſuppoſed to have added to his accompliſhments by travelling into France and the Low Countries; but when he went abroad, or at what time he returned, are circumſtances not determined.

His biographers agree, that on his return, he entered himſelf of the Inner Temple, and proſecuted for ſome time the ſtudy of the law. Speght has given us a record in the Inner Temple (which he ſays a Mr. Buckley had ſeen), where "Geoffrey Chaucer was fined two ſhillings, for beating a Franciſcan friar in Fleet-ſtreet." It were to be wiſhed that he had given the date. Leland ſays, "*Collegia Leguleiorum frequentavit*, after his travels in France, and perhaps before." Theſe travels in France reſt entirely on the authority of Leland, whoſe account is full of inconſiſtencies.

He appears to have been early converſant with the court, and particularly attached to the ſervice of the king's ſon, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaſter, by whoſe favour he obtained in marriage Philippa, daughter of Sir Payne, or Pagan Rouet, a native of Hainault, and ſiſter of the famous Catherine Swynford, the duke's miſtreſs, and afterwards his wife.

As the credit of the Duke of Lancaſter increaſed with his father, Chaucer's alſo roſe in a like proportion; and the livelineſs of his parts, and the native gaiety of his diſpoſition, rendered him a very popular and acceptable character in the Engliſh court, at that time the moſt gay and ſplendid in Europe.

That he had diſtinguiſhed himſelf before this time by his poetical performances, is almoſt certain; and there is a tradition ſupported by ſome paſſages in his *Dream*, and *Cuckoo and Nightingale*, that when he attended the court at Woodſtock, he reſided at a ſquare ſtone houſe near the park ſtile, which ſtill retains his name.

The firſt authentic memorial of Chaucer, is the patent in Rymer, 41. Edward III. by which the king grants to him an annuity of 20 marks, by the title of *Valettus noſter*. He was then in the 39th year of his age. How long he had ſerved the king in that or any other ſtation, and what particular merits were rewarded by this royal bounty, are points equally unknown. There is, however, no ground for ſuppoſing that this mark of his Majeſty's favour was a reward of Chaucer's poetical merits. If it is conſidered that a few years after (48. Edward III.), the king appointed him Comptroller of the Wool, &c. in the port of London, with the following injunction in the patent: "So that the ſaid Geoffrey write with his own hand his rolls, touching the ſaid office, and continually reſide there, and do and execute all things pertaining to the ſaid office in his own proper perſon, and not by his ſubſtitute;"—it ſhould ſeem that Edward, though adorned with many royal and heroic virtues, had not the gift of diſcerning and patronizing a great poet: a gift which, like that of genuine poetry, is only beſtowed on the choſen few, by the peculiar favour of Heaven;

——— neque enim, niſi carus ab ortu
Diis ſuperis, poterit magno fuiſſe poetæ.
MILT. MANSUS.

From this time Chaucer is frequently mentioned in various public inſtruments. In the 46. Edward III., [*Rymer*] the king appoints him Envoy (with two others) to Genoa, by the title of *Scutifer noſter*. This embaſſy might probably have afforded him an opportunity of viſiting Petrarch at Padua, where he tells us, in the prologue to the *Clerkes Tale*, he learned from him the ſtory of Griſelda. But it is uncertain whether he ever went upon the embaſſy; and the biographers of Petrarch, who died the year following (1374), have not recorded the reverential viſit of the Engliſh envoy.

"Some write," says Speght, "that he, with Petrarke, was present at the marriage of Lionell Duke of Clarence, with Violanta, daughter of Galeatius Duke of Millain; yet Paulus Jovius maketh not Chaucer, but Petrarke, he sayeth, was there." It appears from an instrument in Rymer [42. Edward III.], that the Duke of Clarence passed from Dover to Calais in his way to Milan, in the spring of 1368, with a retinue of 457 men and 1280 horses. That Chaucer might have attended the Duke upon this occasion, is not impossible; but his name does not appear among the "Grandi Signori Baroni Inghilese," who were "Com. Mastere Lionell in compagnia" [*Muratori*]. In the 48. Edward III., he has a grant for life of a pitcher of wine daily [*Rymer*]. In the 49. Edward III. the king grants to him the wardship of Sir Edmond Staplegate's heir [*Rymer*], for which he received 104 l.; and, in the next year, some forfeited wool, to the value of 71 l. 4s. 6d. [*Urr. Life of Ch.*]. In the last year of Edward III., he was sent to France with Sir Guichard D'Angle and Richard Stan [for Stury], to treat of a marriage between Richard Prince of Wales, and a daughter of the French king [*Rymer*].

In the next year, 1. Richard II., his annuity of 20 marks was granted to him in lieu of the pitcher of wine daily. In his *Testament of Love*, he alludes to the misfortunes brought upon him by his *meddling* in the disturbances which happened in London in the 7. Richard II. What the real designs of John Combertun, commonly called John of Northampton, and his party, were, and how a trifling city-riot came to be treated as a rebellion, are points of great obscurity. There is good ground to believe that Combertun, in his endeavours to reform the city, according to the advice given by Wickliffe, was countenanced by the Duke of Lancaster, which may account for Chaucer's engagement with that party. When Chaucer fled to Holland, to avoid being examined in relation to these disturbances (as he says, *Test. of Love*) he was probably superseded in his office of Comptroller. It is probable, too, that he was confirmed in it on his return, though the instrument has not been produced. In the 12. Richard II., he had the king's license to surrender his two grants of 20 marks, in favour of John Scalby. This surrender was probably occasioned by his distressed circumstances. In the 13. Richard II., he appears to have been Clerk of the works at Westminster, &c., and in the following year at Windsor. In the 17. Richard II. the king granted him a new annuity of 20 l. [*Rymer.*] If he was ever possessed of Dunnington Castle in Berkshire (as his biographers suppose), he must have purchased it about this time; for it appears to have been in the possession of Sir Richard Adderbury, in the 17. Richard II. [*Monast. Ang. ii.* 474]. But there is no proof of any such purchase; and the situation of his affairs makes it highly improbable. The tradition of an oak in Dunnington park, called Chaucer's oak, may be sufficiently accounted for, without supposing that it was planted by Chaucer himself, as the castle was undoubtedly in the possession of Thomas Chaucer, who is supposed to be his son, for many years.

In the 21. Richard II. the king granted him his protection for two years [*Rymer*]; and in 22. a pipe of wine annually [*ibid*]. In the next year, the 1. Henry IV., his two grants of the annuity of 20 l., and of the pipe of wine, were confirmed to him [*Rymer*]; and at the same time, he had an additional grant of 40 marks, [*ibid*]. It appears that he received an annuity of 10 marks on account of his wife. He died, according to the inscription on his tombstone, in the 2. Henry IV., on the 25th of October 1400, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. A monument was erected to his memory in 1556, by Mr. Nicholas Brigham of Oxford, upon which he caused his picture to be painted, from the original of Occleve, in the illuminated manuscript of his treatise *De regimine Principis*, together with the following inscription, which still remains.

M.S.
Qui fecit Anglorum vates noster maximus olim.
GALFRIDUS CHAUCER conditur hoc tumulo:
Annum si quæras Domini, si tempora vitæ,
Ecce notæ subsunt quæ tibi cuncta notant.
25 Octobris 1400.
Ærumnarum requies mors.
N. Brigham hos fecit Musarum nomine sumptus.
1556.

Theſe are the principal facts in Chaucer's life, which are atteſted by authentic evidences. In his *Treatiſe on the Aſtrolabe*, he informs us that he had a ſon called Lewis, who was ten years of age in 1391. There is no account in what ſtation he lived, or when he died. The relation of Thomas Chaucer to him has not been aſcertained. Speght ſays, "that ſome held opinion, that Thomas Chaucer was not the ſon of Geoffrey;" and there are certainly many circumſtances which render that opinion probable. He married Maude, daughter of Sir John Burgherſhe, reſided chiefly at Ewelm in Oxfordſhire, paſſed through ſeveral public ſtations, and died on the 28th of April 1434.

The poetical compoſitions of Chaucer, particularly his *Canterbury Tales*, obtained him the higheſt place of diſtinction among his contemporaries. The tales, it is probable, were compoſed at different periods of his life. He connected them together in that admirable dramatic ſtructure in which they are at preſent, about the year 1383. They were firſt printed by our meritorious countryman William Caxton, the firſt Engliſh printer, as Ames ſuppoſes, about 1475 or 1476, and again in 1491. Subſequent editions were printed by Wynken de Worde, in 1495, and by Pynſon in 1492, and 1526, which was the firſt that included his miſcellaneous pieces. The next edition was printed by Godfrey in 1532, with Mr. William Thynne's dedication to Henry VIII., and a great number of pieces never before publiſhed. This edition was many times reprinted, as the ſtandard edition of Chaucer's works, till the appearance of the editions of Stowe and Speght in 1561, 1597, and 1602; and of the edition undertaken by Urry, which was publiſhed ſome years after his death, in 1721, with a preface by Mr. Timothy Thomas. An edition of the *Canterbury Tales* was publiſhed by Thomas Tyrwhitt, Eſq., in 4 vols. 8vo, 1775, to which was added, in 1778, a fifth volume, containing an "Eſſay on the Language and Verſification of Chaucer," "an Introductory Diſcourſe to the *Canterbury Tales*, and "a Gloſſary."

The preſent edition of the *Canterbury Tales* is printed from Tyrwhitt's incomparable edition, and his learned and valuable Gloſſary is copied with little variation, except in the omiſſion of the numerical references. The *Plowman's Tale*, *Tale of Gamelyn*, *Adventure of Pardoner and Tapſter*, and *the Merchant's ſecond Tale*, omitted by Tyrwhitt, have been retained, though all evidence, internal and external, is againſt the ſuppoſition of their being the production of Chaucer.

The genuine *miſcellaneous pieces* of Chaucer are printed from Urry's edition, excluſive of thoſe pieces which are known to be the production of other authors, and the anonymous compoſitions, which, from time to time, have been added to Chaucer's, in the ſeveral editions, without any evidence whatever. Beſides theſe more conſiderable works, it appears that he had compoſed many *Balades*, *Roundels*, *Virelays*, and that he had *made many a Lay and many a Thing*. A few pieces of this ſort are ſtill extant, and inſerted here as they ſtand in the editions.

The works of Chaucer in proſe are, a tranſlation of Boethius *de conſolatione Philoſophiæ*, which he has mentioned himſelf in *the Legende of Goode Women*, *A Treatiſe on the Aſtrolabe*, addreſſed to his ſon Lewis in 1391, and *the Teſtament of Love*, which is evidently an imitation of Boethius *de Conſolatione Philoſophiæ*.

The private character of Chaucer appears to have been as reſpectable as his literary character was truly illuſtrious. In his manners he was mild and gentle; in his diſpoſition he was open and ingenuous. He was a fine gentlemen, an agreeable companion, and a learned writer. His contemporaries and diſciples, Gower, Occleve, and Lydgate, are laviſh in his praiſe. With Wickliffe, the father of the Reformation, he concurred in ſentiments of religion, and co-operated in his moſt valuable deſigns; ſo natural is the connection between genius and the love of liberty.

On the literary character of Chaucer it is the leſs neceſſary to enlarge, as it has within theſe few years been ſo accurately and amply diſplayed by Mr. Warton, the learned hiſtorian of the Engliſh poetry, whoſe death is an irreparable loſs to Engliſh literature, and Mr. Tyrwhitt, whoſe edition of *the Canterbury Tales* is the moſt curious, erudite, and valuable publication that has yet appeared in this country.

Chaucer is uſually characteriſed as the Reformer of the Engliſh language, and the father of Engliſh poetry. He undoubtedly critically cultivated his native tongue, that he might reform its irregularities, and eſtabliſh an Engliſh ſtyle; and he was certainly the firſt perſon in England to whom the appellation of a poet, in its genuine luſtre, could be applied. He has attempted every ſpe-

ties of poetry, from an epigram to an epic poem, and has succeeded in all. If, however he appears pre-eminent in any one poetical department, it is in the deſcriptive. The *Canterbury Tales*, his greateſt production, exhibit a wonderful variety of talents; for they abound with the ſublime and the pathetic, with admirable ſatire, genuine humour, and an uncommon knowledge of life. They were probably compoſed in imitation of the "Decameron" of Boccace, though upon a different and improved plan. The general plan may be learned from the prologue he has prefixed to them. He ſuppoſes there, that a company of pilgrims going to Canterbury, aſſemble at an inn in Southwark, and agree, that for their common amuſement on the road, each of them ſhall tell at leaſt one tale in going to Canterbury, and another in coming back from thence; and that he who ſhall tell the beſt tales, ſhall be treated by the reſt with a ſupper, upon their return to the ſame inn. It appears alſo that he deſigned to deſcribe their journey, *and all the remenant of their pilgrimage*, including probably their adventures at Canterbury, as well as upon the road; but this extenſive and difficult undertaking has been left imperfect; and more than one half of the tales he intended to give is wanting. The characters of the pilgrims are as various as at that time could be found in the departments of middle life; and the ſtories are exactly ſuited to their characters, and clearly evince, that Chaucer, notwithſtanding the aids he derived from his acquaintance with Italian literature, was poſſeſſed of a noble invention, and a fruitful imagination.

The Knight's Tale, *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, *Tale of the Nun's Prieſt*, *Flower and the Leſe*, and *The Character of a Good Parſon*, have been thought worthy of imitation and revival by Dryden, whoſe paraphraſes, particularly of the *Knight's Tale*, and of the *Flower and the Leaf*, are the moſt animated and harmonious pieces of verſification in the Engliſh language. Pope has imitated the *Merchant's Tale*, *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*, and *The Houſe of Fame*, with his uſual elegance of diction and harmony of verſification. Mr. Betterton has tranſlated the *Reve's Tale* and the *Characters of the Pilgrims*; and a collection of "The Canterbury Tales Modernized," was publiſhed by Mr. Ogle, in 3 vol. 8vo, 1741.

The *Squier's Tale* is conſidered by Mr. Warton as Chaucer's capital poem; and he has admirably explained the origin of the fictions with which it abounds. With like ingenuity and learning he illuſtrates the various poems of Chaucer; and with regard to thoſe which had a foreign original, ſhews how far the productions which gave riſe to them have been copied, altered, and improved. The compariſon turns out in many reſpects to the advantage of the Engliſh poet.

"Chaucer," ſays he, "was a man of the world; and from this circumſtance we are to account, in a great meaſure, for the many new embelliſhments conferred on our poetry. The deſcriptions of ſplendid proceſſions and gallant carouſals, with which his works abound, are a proof that he was converſant with the practice and diverſions of polite life. His travels likewiſe enabled him to cultivate the Italian and Provençal poetry with the greateſt ſucceſs, and induced him to poliſh the aſperity, and enrich the ſterility of his native verſification, with ſofter cadences, and a more copious and variegated phraſeology."

Concerning the licentious paſſages that are to be met with in Chaucer's poems, the ſame ingenious and learned writer obſerves, that they are in a great meaſure to be imputed to the age in which they were written. "We are apt," ſays he, "to form romantic and exaggerated notions about the moral innocence of our anceſtors. Ages of ignorance and ſimplicity are thought to be ages of purity. The direct contrary I believe is the caſe. Rude periods have that groſſneſs of manners, which is not leſs friendly to virtue than luxury itſelf. In the middle ages, not only the moſt flagrant violations of modeſty were frequently practiſed and permitted, but the moſt infamous vices. Men are leſs aſhamed as they are leſs poliſhed. Great refinement multiplies criminal pleaſures, but at the ſame time prevents the actual commiſſion of many enormities, at leaſt it preſerves public decency, and ſuppreſſes public licentiouſneſs."

In delineating Chaucer's talent for humour, Mr. Warton agrees with Dr. Hurd, who, in his "Letters on Chivalry," ſuppoſes that the *Rime of Sir Thopas*, was intended to expoſe the leading abſurdities of the old romance. That this was Chaucer's aim appears from many paſſages taken

from *Flandrin*, *Libeaus Defcaus*, and other romances, in the fame ſtyle, which are ſtill extant; and therefore the tale may juſtly be called a prelude to Don Quixotte.

From Mr. Warton's ſurvey of the poems of Chaucer, theſe concluſions are deduced concerning him:—That in cultivation and elegance, in harmony and perſpicuity of verſification, he ſurpaſſes his predeceſſors in an infinite proportion; that his genius was univerſal, and adapted to themes of unbounded variety; that his merit was not leſs in painting familiar manners with humour and propriety, than in moving the paſſions, and in repreſenting the beautiful, or the grand objects of nature, with grace and ſublimity; and that he appeared with all the luſtre of a true poet, in an age which compelled him to ſtruggle with a barbarous language, and a national want of taſte; and when to write verſes at all was a ſingular qualification.

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE PROLOGUE.

WHANNE that Aprill with his ſhoures ſote
The droughte of March hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veine in ſwiche licour,
Of whiche vertue engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eke with his ſote brethe
Inſpired hath in every holt and hethe
The tendre croppes, and the yonge ſonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,
And ſmale foules maken melodie,
That ſlepen alle night with open eye,
So priketh hem nature in hir corages,
Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to ſeken ſtrange ſtrondes,
To ſerve halwes couthe in ſondry londes;
And ſpecially from every ſhire's ende
Of Engleland to Canterbury they wende,
The holy bliſsful martyr for to ſeke
That hem hath holpen whan that they were ſeke.

Beſelle that in that ſeſon on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay,
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury with devoute courage,
At night was come into that hoſtelrie
Wel nine-and-twenty in a compagnie
Of ſondry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felawſhip, and pilgrimes were they alle
That toward Canterbury wolden ride.
The chambres and the ſtables weren wide,
And wel we weren eſed atte beſte.

And ſhortly when the ſonne was gon to reſte,
So hadde I ſpoken with hem everich on,
That I was of hir felawſhip anon,
And made forword erly for to riſe,
To take oure way ther, as I you deviſe.

But natheles while I have time and ſpace,
Or that I forther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it accordant to reſon
To tellen you alle the condition
Of eche of hem, ſo as it ſemed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degre,
And eke in what araie that they were inne;
And at a knight than wol I firſte beginne.

A *Knight* ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the time that he firſte began
To riden out, he loved chivalrie,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteſie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he ridden, no man ferre
As well in Criſtendom as in Hetheneſſe,
And ever honoured for his worthineſſe.

At Alisandre he was whan it was wonne *
Ful often time he hadde the bord begonne †
Aboven alle nations in Pruce:
In Lettowe hadde he reyſed and in Ruce,
No Criſten man ſo ofte of his degre:
In Gernade at the ſiege eke hadde he be
Of Algeſir, and ridden in Belmarie;
At Leyes was he, and at Satalie,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete Sce
At many a noble armee hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he ben fiftene,
And foughten for our faith at Tramiſſene
In liſtes thries, and ay ſlain his fo.

This ilke worthy Knight hadde ben alſo

* Alexandria in Egypt was won (and immediately after abandoned) in 1365 by Pierre de Luſignan king of Cyprus.

† He had been placed at the head of the table, the uſual compliment to extraordinary merit, as the commentators very properly explain it.

Some time with the Lord of Palatie*
Agen another Hethen in Turkie,
And evermore he hadde a sovereine pris,
And though that he was worthy, he was wise,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vilanie ne sayde
In alle his lif unto no manere wight:
He was a veray parfit gentil Knight.
But for to tellen you of his araie,
His hors was good, but he ne was not gaie.
Of fustian he wered a gipon
Alle besmotred with his habergeon,
For he was late ycome fro his viage,
And wente for to don his pilgrimage.
With him ther was his sone, a yonge *Squier*,
A lover and a lusty bacheler,
With lockes crull as they were laide in presse;
Of twenty yere age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of even lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and grete of strengthe;
And he hadde be sometime in chevachie
In Flaunders, in Artois, and in Picardie,
And borne him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his ladies grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Alle full of fresshe floures white and rede:
Singing he was or floyting alle the day:
He was as fresshe as is the moneth of May:
Short was his goune, with sleves long and wide;
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and fayre ride:
He coude songes make, and wel endite.
Juste and eke dance, and wel pourtraie and write:
So hote he loved, that by nightertale
He slep no more than doth the nightingale:
Curteis he was, lowly and servisable,
And carf before his fader at the table.
A *Yeman* hadde he, and servantes no mo
At that time, for him luste to ride so,
And he was cladde in cote and hode of grene;
A shefe of peacock arwes bright and kene
Under his belt he bare full thriftily:
Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
His arwes drouped not with fetheres lowe,
And in his hond he bare a mighty bowe.
A not-hed hadde he, with a broune visage:
Of wood-craft coude he wel alle the usage:
Upon his arme he bare a gaie bracer,
And by his side a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that other side a gaie daggere,
Harneised wel, and sharp as point of spere:
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
An horne he bare, the baudrik was of grene:
A forster was he sothely, as I gesse.
Ther was also a Nonne, a *Prioresse*,
That of hire smiling was ful simple and coy,
Hire greteste othe n'as but by Seint Eloy,
And she was cleped Madam Eglentine;
Ful wel she sange the service devine,
Entuned in hire nose ful swetely;
And Frenche she spake ful fayre and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frenche of Paris was to hire unknowe:
At mete was she wel ytaughte withalle,
She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,
Ne wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe;
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
Thatte no drope ne fell upon hire brest:
In curtesie was sette ful moche hire lest:
Hire over lippe wiped she so clene,
That in hire cuppe was no ferthing sene
Of grese when she dronken hadde hire draught;
Full semely after hire mete she raught:
And sikerly she was of grete disport,
And ful pleasant and amiable of port,
And peined hire to contrefetan chere
Of court and ben estatelich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous
She wolde wepe if that she saw a mous
Caughte in a trappe if it were ded or bledde.
Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel brede,
But sore wept she if on of hem were dede,
Or if men smote it with a yerde smert;
And all was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hire wimple ypinched was,
Hire nose tretis, hire eyen grey as glas;
Hire mouth full smale, and therto soft and red;
But sikerly she hadde a fayre forehed:
It was almost a spanne brode I trowe,
For hardily she was not undergrowe.
Ful fetife was hire cloke, as I was ware.
Of smale corall aboute hire arm she bare
A pair of bedes gauded all with grene,
And thereon heng a broche of gold ful shene
On whiche was first ywritten a crouned A,
And after *Amor vincit omnia*.
Another *Nonne* also with hire hadde she
That was hire chapelleine, and *Preestes* thre.
A *Monk* ther was, a fayre for the maistrie,
An out-rider that loved venerie;
A manly man to ben an abbot able;
Ful many a deinte hors hadde he in stable,
And whan he rode, men mighte his bridel here
Gingeling in a whistling wind, as clere
And eke as loude as doth the chapell' belle
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.
The reule of Seint Maure and of Seint Beneit,
Because that it was olde and somdele streit,
This ilke monk lette olde thinges pace,
And helde after the newe world the trace.
He yave not of the text a pulled hen
That saith that hunters ben not holy men,
Ne that a monk whan he is rekkeles
Is like to a fish that is waterles;
This is to say, a monk out of his cloistre;
This ilke text held he not worth an oistre;
And I say his opinion was good.
What! shulde he studie and make himselven wood,
Upon a book in cloistre alway to pore,
Or swinken with his hondes, and laboure,
As Austin bit? how shal the world be served?
Let Austin have his swink to him reserved:
Therfore he was a prickasoure a right.
Greihoundes he hadde as swift as foul of flight.
Of pricking and of hunting for the hare
Was all his lust; for no cost wolde he spare.
I saw his sleves purfiled at the hond
With gris, and that the finest of the lond;

* Palathia in Anatolia.

And for to faſten his hood under his chinne
He hadde of gold ywrought a curious pinne;
A love-knotte in the greter ende ther was.
His hed was balled, and ſhone as any glas;
And eke his face, as it hadde ben anoint:
He was a lord ful fat, and in good point:
His eyen ſtepe, and rolling in his hed,
That ſtemed as a forneis of a led;
His bootes ſouple, his hors in gret eſtat;
Now certainly he was a fayre prelat:
He was not pale as a forpined goſt;
A fat ſwan loved he beſt of any roſt:
His palfrey was as broune as is a bery.

A *Frere* ther was, a wanton and a mery,
A limitour, a ful ſolempne man:
In all the ordres foure is non that can
So moche of daliance and fayre langage.
He hadde ymade ful many a mariage
Of yonge wimmen at his owen coſt;
Until his ordre he was a noble poſt.
Ful wel beloved and familier was he
With frankeleins over all in his contree,
And eke with worthy wimmen of the Toun,
For he had power of confeſſion,
As ſaide himſelfe, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was a licenciat.
Ful ſwetely herde he confeſſion,
And pleſant was his abſolution.
He was an eſy man to give penance
Ther as he wiſte to han a good pitance,
For unto a poure ordre for to give
Is ſigne that a man is wel yſhrive;
For if he gave he dorſte make avant
He wiſte that a man was repentant;
For many a man ſo hard is of his herte,
He may not wepe although him ſore ſmerte;
Therfore in ſtede of weping and praieres
Men mote give ſilver to the poure freres.
His tippet was ay farſed ful of knives
And pinnes for to given fayre wives:
And certainly he hadde a mery note;
Wel coude he ſinge and plaien on a rote.
Of yeddinges * he bare utterly the pris;
His nekke was white as the flour de lis;
Therto he ſtrong was as a champioun,
And knew wel the tavernes in every toun,
And every hoſteler and gay tapſtere,
Better than a lazar or a beggere;
For unto ſwiche a worthy man as he
Accordeth nought, as by his faculte
To haven with ſike lazars acquaintance:
It is not honeſt, it may not avance,
As for to delen with no ſwiche pouraille,
But all with riche and ſellers of vitaille.
And over all, ther as profit ſhuld ariſe
Curteis he was, and lowly of ſerviſe:
Ther n'as no man no wher ſo vertuous;
He was the beſte begger in all his hous,
And gave a certaine ferme for the grant
Non of his bretheren came in his haunt:
For though a widewe hadde but a ſhoo,
(So pleſant was his *In principio*)
Yet wold he have a ferthing or he went;
His pourchas was wel better than his rent:
And rage he coude as it hadde ben a whelp;
In lovedayes ther coude be mochel help;
For ther was he nat like a cloiſterere,
With thredbare cope, as is a poure ſcolere,
But he was like a maiſter or a pope:
Of double worſted was his ſemicope,
That round was as a belle out of the preſſe.
Somwhat he liſped for his wantonneſſe
To make his Engliſh ſwete upon his tonge;
And in his harping, whan that he hadde ſonge,
His eyen twinkeled in his hed aright
As don the ſterres in a froſty night.
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

A *Merchant* was ther with a forked berd;
In mottelee, and highe on hors he ſat,
And on his hed a Faundriſh bever hat.
His bootes clapſed fayre and fetiſly;
His reſons ſpake he ful ſolempnely,
Souning alway the encreſe of his winning:
He wold the ſee were kept * for any thing
Betwixen Middelburgh and Orewell.
Wel coud he in eſchanges ſheldes ſelle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit beſette;
Ther wiſte no wight that he was in dette,
So ſtedefaſtly didde he his governance
With his bargeines and with his chevifance.
Forſothe he was a worthy man withalle,
But ſoth to ſayn I n'ot how men him calle.

A *Clerk* ther was of Oxenford alſo,
That unto logike hadde long ygo.
As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he was not right fat I undertake,
But loked holwe, and therto ſoberly.
Ful thredbare was his overeſt courtepy,
For he hadde geten him yet no benefice,
Ne was nought worldly to have an office;
For him was lever han at his beddes hed
Twenty bokes clothed in blake or red
Of Ariſtotle and his philoſophie
Then robes riche, or fidel or ſautrie:
But all be that he was a philoſophre
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,
But all that he might of his frendes hente
On bokes and on lerning he it ſpente,
And befily gan for the ſoules praie
Of hem that yave him wherwith to ſcolaie.
Of ſtudie toke he moſte cure and hede;
Not a word ſpake he more than was nede,
And that was ſaid in forme and reverence,
And ſhort and quike, and ful of high ſentence;
Souning in moral vertue was his ſpeche,
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

A *Sergeant of the Lawe* ware and wiſe,
That often hadde yben at the paruis,
Ther was alſo, ful riche of excellence;
Diſcrete he was, and of grete reverence;
He ſemed ſwiche, his words were ſo wiſe:
Juſtice he was ful often in aſſiſe
By patent and by pleine commiſſioun:
For his ſcience and for his high renoun

* This word, being not underſtood, has been changed in ſome copies into *tidinges* and *weddinges*. It probably means a kind of ſong, from the Saxon *geddian* or *giddian*, to ſing.

* *i. e.* guarded. The old ſubſidy of tonnage or poundage was given to the king "pur la ſauſgarde et cuſtodie del ' mer," 12 Edw. IV. c. 3.

Of fees and robes had he many on:
So grete a pourchasour was no wher non:
All was fee simple to him in effect,
His pourchasing might not ben in suspect:
No wher so besy a man as he ther n'as,
And yet he semed besier than he was.
In termes hadde he cas and domes alle
That fro the time of King Will, weren falle;
Therto he coude endite and make a thing;
Ther coude no wight pinche at his writing;
And every statute coude he plaine by rote.
He rode but homely in a medlee cote
Girt with a seint of silk with barres smale.
Of his array tell I no lenger tale.

A *Frankelein* was in this compagnie;
White was his berd as is the dayesie:
Of his complexion he was sanguin;
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in win:
To liven in delit was ever his wone,
For he was Epicure's owen sone,
That held opinion that plein delit
Was verally felicite parfite.
And housholder, and that a grete was he;
Seint Julian he was in his contree.
His bred, his ale, was alway after on;
A better envyned man was no wher non.
Withouten bake mete never was his hous
Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous
It snewed in his house of mete and drinke
Of alle deintees that men coud of thinke.
After the sondry sesons of the yere
So changed he his mete and his soupere.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,
And many a breme, and many a luce in stewe.
Wo was his cook but if his sauce were
Poinant and sharpe, and redy all his gere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stode redy covered alle the longe day.
At sessions there was he lord and sire;
Full often time he was knight of the shire.
An anelace and a gipciere all of silk
Heng at his girdel white as morwe milk.
A shereve hadde he ben and a countour;
Was no wher swiche a worthy vavasour *.

An *Haberdasher*, and a *Carpenter*,
A *Webbe*, a *Dyer*, and a *Tapiser*,
Were alle yclothed in o livere
Of a solempne and grete fraternite.
Ful freshe and newe hir gere ypiked was;
Hir knives were ychaped not with bras,
But all with silver wrought ful clene and wel,
Hir girdeles and hir pouches every del:
Wel semed eche of hem a fayre burgeis
To sitten in a gild halle on the deis:
Everich for the wisdom that he can
Was shapelich for to ben an alderman.
For catel hadden they ynough and rent,
And eke hir wives wolde it wel assent;
And elles certainly they were to blame:
It is ful fayre to ben yeleped Madame,
And for to gon to vigiles all before,
And have a mantel reallich yboren.

A *Cok* they hadden with hem for the nones,
To boile the chikenes and the marie bones,
And poudre marchant, tart and galingale.
Wel coude he knowe a draught of London ale.
He coude roste, and sethe, and broile, and frie,
Maken mortrewes, and wel bake a pie;
But gret harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shinne a mormal hadde he.
For blanc manger that made he with the best.

A *Shipman* was ther woned fer by west;
For ought I wote he was of Dertemouth:
He rode upon a rouncie, as he couthe,
All in a goune of falding to the knee.
A dagger hanging by a las hadde hee
About his nekke under his arm adoun;
The hote sommer hadde made his hewe all broun:
And certainly he was a good felaw;
Ful many a draught of win he hadde draw
From Burdeux ward while that the chapmen slepe:
Of nice conscience toke he no kepe.
If that he faught and hadde the higher hand,
By water he sent hem home to every land.
But of his craft to reken wel his tides,
His stremes and his strandes him besides,
His herberwe, his mone, and his lodemanage,
Ther was non swiche from Hull unto Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wise, I undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd be shake:
He knew wel alle the havens as they were
Fro Gotland to the Cape de Finistere,
And every creke in Bretagne and in Spaine:
His barge ycleped was the Magdelaine.

With us ther was a *Doctour of Phisike*;
In all this world ne was ther non him like
To speke of phisike and of surgerie,
For he was grounded in astronomie.
He kept his patient a ful gret del
In houres by his magike naturel:
Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images for his patient.
He knew the cause of every maladie,
Were it of cold, or hote, or moist, or drie,
And wher engendred, and of what humour:
He was a veray parfite practisour.
The cause yknowe, and of his harm the rote,
Anon he gave to the sike man his bote.
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries
To send him dragges and his lettuaries,
For eche of hem made other for to winne:
Hir frendship n'as not newe to beginne.
Wel knew he the old Esculapius,
And Dioscorides and eke Rufus,
Old Hippocras, Hali, and Gallien,
Serapion, Rasis, and Avicen,
Averrois, Damascene, and Constantin,
Bernard, and Gatisden, and Gilbertin.
Of his diete mesurable was he;
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of gret nourishing and digestible:
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sanguin and in perse he clad was alle,
Lined with taffata and with sendalle.

* The precise import of this word is often as obscure as its original. See *Du Cange* in v. In this place it should perhaps be understood to mean the whole class of middling landholders.

And yet he was but eſy of diſpence;
He kepte that he wan in the peſtilence;
For gold in phiſike is a cordial,
Therfore he loved gold in ſpecial.
A good *Wif* was ther of beſide *Bathe*,
But ſhe was ſom del deſe, and that was ſcathe.
Of cloth making ſhe hadde ſwiche an haunt,
She paſſed hem of Ipres and of Gaunt.
In all the pariſh wif ne was ther non
That to the offring before hire ſhulde gon,
And if ther did, certain ſo wroth was ſhe,
That ſhe was out of alle charitee.
Hire coverchiefs weren ful fine of ground;
I dorſte ſwere they weyeden a pound
That on the Sonday were upon hire hede:
Hire hoſen weren of fine ſcarlet rede,
Ful ſtreite yteyed, and ſhoon ful moiſt and newe:
Bold was hire face, and fayre and rede of hew.
She was a worthy woman all hire live;
Houſbondes at the chirche dore had ſhe had five,
Withouten other compagnie in youthe,
But therof nedeth not to ſpeke as nouthe;
And thries hadde ſhe ben at Jeruſaleme;
She hadde paſſed many a ſtrange ſtreme:
At Rome ſhe hadde ben, and at Boloine,
In Galice at Seint James, and at Coloine:
She coude moche of wandring by the way;
Gat-tothed was ſhe, ſothly for to ſay;
Upon an ambler eſily ſhe ſat,
Ywimpled wel, and on hire hede an hat
As brode as is a bokeler or a targe,
A ſote mantel about hire hippes large,
And on hire fete a pair of ſporres ſharpe.
In felawſhip wel coude ſhe laughe and carpe;
Of remedies of love ſhe knew parchance,
For of that arte ſhe coude the olde dance.
A good man ther was of religioun
That was a poure *Perſone* of a toun,
But riche he was of holy thought and werk;
He was alſo a lerned man, a Clerk,
That Criſtes goſpel trewely wolde preche;
His pariſhens devoutly wolde he teche;
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adverſite ful patient,
And ſwiche he was ypreved often ſithes;
Ful loth were him to curſen for his tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven out of doute
Unto his poure pariſhens aboute
Of his offring, and eke of his ſubſtance;
He coude in litel thing have ſuffiſance:
Wide was his pariſh, and houſes fer aſonder,
But he ne left nought for no rain ne thonder,
In ſikeneſſe and in miſchief to viſite
The ferreſt in his pariſh moche and lite
Upon his fete, and in his hand a ſtaf:
This noble enſample to his ſhepe he yaf,
That firſt he wrought and afterward he taught,
Out of the goſpel he the wordes caught,
And this figure he added yet thereto
That if gold ruſte, what ſhuld iren do
For if a preeſt be foule on whom we truſt
No wonder is a lewed man to ruſt;
And ſhame it is if that a preeſt take kepe
To ſee a ſhitten ſhepherd and clene ſhepe:
Wel ought a preeſt enſample for to yeve
By his cleneneſſe how his ſhepe ſhulde live.
He ſette not his benefice to hire,
And lette his ſhepe accombred in the mire,
And ran unto London unto Seint Poules
To ſeken him a chanterie for ſoules,
Or with a brotherhede to be withold,
But dwelt at home and kepte wel his fold,
So that the wolf ne made it not miſcarie:
He was a ſhepherd and no mercenarie;
And though he holy were and vertuous
He was to ſinful men not diſpitous,
Ne of his ſpeche dangerous ne digne,
But in his teching diſcrete and benigne.
To drawen folk to heven with faireneſſe;
By good enſample, was his beſineſſe;
But it were any perſone obſtinat,
What ſo he were of highe or low eſtat,
Him wolde he ſnibben ſharply for the nones:
A better preeſt I trowe that no wher non is,
He waited after no pompe ne reverence,
Ne maked him no ſpiced conſcience
But Criſtes lore, and his apoſtles twelve
He taught, but firſt he folwed it himſelve.
With him ther was a *Plowman*, was his brother,
That hadde ylaid of dong ful many a fother;
A true ſwinker and a good was he,
Living in pees and parfite charitee:
God loved he beſte with alle his herte
At alle times, were it gain or ſmerte,
And than his neighebour right as himſelve.
He wolde threſh, and therto dike and delve,
For Criſtes ſake, for every poure wight
Withouten hire, if it lay in his might.
His tithes paied he ful fayre and wel
Both of his propre ſwinke and his catel.
In a tabard he rode upon a mere.
Ther was alſo a Reve, and a Millere,
A Sompnour, and a Pardoner alſo,
A Manciple, and myſelf; ther n'ere no mo.
The *Miller* was a ſtout carl for the nones,
Ful bigge he was of braun and eke of bones,
That proved wel, for over all ther he came,
At wraſtling he wolde bere away the ram.
He was ſhort ſhuldered, brode, a thikke gnarre,
Ther n'as no dore that he n'olde heve of barre
Or breke it at a renning with his hede;
His berd as any ſowe or fox was rede,
And therto brode as though it were a ſpade.
Upon the cop right of his noſe he hade
A wert, and theron ſtode a tufte of heres
Rede as the briſtles of a ſowes eres:
His noſe-thirles blacke were and wide:
A ſwerd and bokeler bare he by his ſide:
His mouth as wide was as a forneis:
He was a jangler and a Goliardeis,
And that was moſt of ſinne and harlotries:
Wel coude he ſtelen corne and tollen thries;
And yet he had a thomb of gold parde,
A white cote and a blew hode wered he:
A baggepipe wel coude he blowe and ſoune,
And therwithall he brought us out of toune.
A gentil *Manciple* was ther of a temple,
Of which achatours mighten take enſemple

For to ben wiſe in bying of vitaille,
For whether that he paide or toke by taille
Algate he waited ſo in his achate
That he was ay before in good eſtate:
Now is not that of God a ful fayre grace
That ſwiche a lewed mannes wit ſhal pace
The wiſdom of an hepe of lered men?
Of maiſters had he mo than thries ten
That were of lawe expert and curious,
Of which ther was a dofein in that hous
Worthy ſo ben ſtewardes of rent and lond
Of any lord that is in Englelond,
To maken him live by his propre good
In honour detteles, but if he were wood,
Or live as ſcarſly as him lift deſire,
And able for to helpen all a ſhire
In any cas that mighte fallen or happe;
And yet this Manciple ſette hir aller cappe.

The *Reve* was a ſlendre colerike man,
His berd was ſhave as neighe as ever he can;
His here was by his eres round yſhorne;
His top was docked like a preeſt beforne:
Ful longe were his legges and ful lene,
Ylike a ſtaff; ther was no calf yſene:
Wel coude he kepe a garner and a binne;
Ther was non auditour coude on him winne;
Wel wiſte he by the drought and by the rain
The yelding of his ſeed and of his grain.
His lordes ſhepe, his nete, and his deirie,
His ſwine, his hors, his ſtore, and his pultrie,
Were holly in his Reves governing,
And by his covenant yave he rekening,
Sin that his lord was twenty yere of age;
Ther coude no man bring him in arerage.
Ther n'as bailliff, ne herde, ne other hine,
That he ne knew his ſleight and his covine;
They were adradde of him as of the deth.
His wonning was ful fayre upon an heth;
With grene trees yſhadewed was his place;
He conde better than his lord purchace:
Ful riche he was yſtored privily:
His lord wel coude he pleſen ſubtilly
To yeve and lene him of his owen good,
And have a thank and yet a cote and hood.
In youthe he lerned hadde a good miſtere;
He was a wel good wright, a carpentere.
This Reve ſate upon a right good ſtot
That was all pomelee grey, and highte Scot;
A long ſurcote of perſe upon he hade,
And by his ſide he bare a ruſty blade.
Of Norfolk was this Reve of which I tell,
Beſide a toun men clepen Baldeſwell.
Tucked he was, as is a frere aboute,
And ever he rode the hindereſt of the route.

A *Sampnour* was ther with us in that place
That hadde a fire-red cherubinnes face,
For ſauſefleme he was, with eyen narwe;
As hote he was and likerous as a ſparwe,
With ſcalled browes blake and pilled berd;
Of his viſage children were ſore aferd.
Ther n'as quickſilver, litarge, ne brimſton,
Boras, ceruſe, ne oile of tartre non,
Ne oinement, that wolde clenſe or bite,
That him might helpen of his whelkes white,
Ne of the knobbes ſitting on his chekes:
Wel loved he garlike, onions, and lekes,
And for to drinke ſtrong win as rede as blood,
Than wolde he ſpeke and crie as he were wood;
And whan that he wel dronken had the win,
Than wold he ſpeken no word but Latin:
A fewe termes coude he, two or three,
That he had lerned out of ſom decree;
No wonder is, he heard it all the day:
And eke ye knowen wel how that a jay
Can clepen watte as wel as can the pope:
But who ſo wolde in other thing him grope
Than hadde he ſpent all his philoſophie;
Ay *Queſtio quid juris?* wolde he crie.

He was a gentil harlot * and a kind;
A better felaw ſhulde a man not find:
He wolde ſuffre for a quart of wine
A good felaw to have his concubine
A twelvemonth, and excuſe him at the full;
Ful prively a finch eke coude he pull;
And if he found o where a good felawe
He wolde techen him to have non awe
In ſwiche a cas of the archedekenes curſe,
But if a mannes ſoule were in his purſe,
For in his purſe he ſhulde ypuniſhed be;
Purſe is the archedekens helle, ſaid he,
But wel I wote he lied right in dede;
Of curſing ought eche gilty man him drede,
For curſe wol ſle right as aſſoiling ſaveth,
And alſo ware him of a *ſignificavit*.

In danger hadde he at his owen giſe
The yonge girles of the diociſe,
And knew hir counſeil and was of hir rede.
A gerlond hadde he ſette upon his hede
As gret as it were for an aleſtake;
A bokeler hadde he made him of a cake.

With him ther rode a gentil *Pardonere*
Of Rouncevall, his frend and his compere,
That ſtreit was comen from the court of Rome;
Ful loude he ſang, Come hither love to me.
This Sompnour bare to him a ſtiff burdoun,
Was never trompe of half ſo gret a ſoun.
This Pardoner had here as yelwe as wax.
But ſmoth it heng as doth a ſtrike of flax;
By unces heng his lokkes that he hadde,
And therwith he his ſhulders overſpradde:
Full thinne it lay, by culpons on and on,
But hode for jolite ne wered he non.
For it was truſſed up in his wallet.
Him thought he rode all of the newe get,
Diſhevele, ſauf his cappe, he rode all bare:
Swiche glaring eyen hadde he as an hare:
A vernicle hadde he ſewed upon his cappe;
His wallet lay beforne him in his lappe
Bret-ful of pardon come from Rome al hote:
A vois he hadde as ſmale as hath a gote:
No berd hadde he, ne never non ſhulde have;
As ſmothe it was as it were newe ſhave:
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.

But of his craft, fro Berwike unto Ware

* The name of harlot was anciently given to men, as well as women.

He was ther ſwiche an other Pardonere,
For in his male he hadde a pilwebere
Which, as he ſaide, was oure Ladies viel:
He ſaide he hadde a gobbet of the ſeyl
Thatte Seint Peter had whan that he went
Upon the ſee till Jeſu Criſt him hent:
He had a-crois of laton ful of ſtones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with theſe relikes whanne that he fond
A poure perſone dwelling up on lond,
Upon a day he gat him more moneie
Than that the perſone gat in monethes tweie;
And thus with fained flattering and japes
He made the perſone and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen atte laſt,
He was in chirche a noble eccleſiaſt:
Wel coude he rede a leſſon or a ſtorie,
But alderbeſt he ſang an offertorie;
For wel he wiſte whan that ſong was ſonge
He muſte preache and wel atile his ton
To winne ſilver, as he right wel coude,
Therfore he ſang the merier and loude.
Now have I told you ſhortly in a clauſe
Th' eſtat, th' araie, the nombre, and eke the cauſe,
Why that aſſembled was this compagnie
In Southwerk at this gentil hoſtelrie
That highte The Tabard, faſt by the Belle.
But now is time to you for to telle
How that we baren us that ilke night
Whan we were in that hoſtelrie alight;
And after wol I tell of our viage,
And all the rememant of our pilgrimage.
But firſte I praie you of your curteſie
That ye ne arette it not my vilanie,
Though that I plainly ſpeke in this matere,
To tellen you hir wordes and hir chere,
Ne though I ſpeke hir words proprely;
For this ye knowen al ſo wel as I,
Who ſo ſhall telle a Tale after a man
He moſte reherſe as neighe as ever he can
Everich word, if it be in his charge,
All ſpeke he never ſo rudely and ſo large,
Or elles he moſte tellen his Tale untrewe,
Or feinen thinges, or finden wordes newe:
He may not ſpare although he were his brother;
He moſte as wel ſayn o word as an other.
Criſt ſpake himſelf ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye wote no vilanie is it:
Eke Plato ſayeth, who ſo can him rede,
The wordes moſt ben cofin to the dede.
Alſo I praie you to forgive it me
All have I not ſette folk in hir degree
Here in this Tale as that they ſhulden ſtonde:
My wit is ſhort ye may well underſtonde.
Gret chere made our Hoſte us everich on,
And to the ſouper ſette he us anon.
And ſerved us with vitaille of the beſte;
Strong was the win, and wel to drink us leſte.
A ſemely man our Hoſte was with alle
For to han ben a marſhal in an halle;
A large man he was, with eyen ſtepe;
A fairer burgeis is ther none in Chepe:
Bold of his ſpeche, and wiſe, and wel ytaught,
And of manhood elaked right him naught:
Eke therto was he right a merry man,
And after ſouper plaien he began,
And ſpake of mirthe amonges other thinges
Whan that we hadden made our rekeninges,
And ſaide thus; Now Lordinges, trewely
Ye ben to me welcome right hertily,
For by my trouthe, if that I ſhal not lie,
I ſaw nat this yere ſwiche a compagnie
At ones in this herberwe as is now;
Fayn wolde I do you mirthe and I wiſte how;
And of a mirthe I am right now bethought
To don you eſe, and it ſhall coſte you nought.
Ye gon to Canterbury; God you ſpede,
The bliſsful martyr quite you your mede;
And wel I wot as ye gon by the way
Ye ſhapen you to talken and to play;
For trewely comfort ne mirthe is non
To riden by the way dombe as the ſton;
And therfore wold I maken you diſport,
As I ſaid erſt, and don you ſome comfort.
And if you liketh alle by on aſſent
Now for to ſtonden at my jugement,
And for to werchen as I ſhal you ſay
To-morwe, whan ye riden on the way,
Now by my faders ſoule that is ded
But ye be mery, ſmiteth of my hed:
Hold up your hondes withouten more ſpeche.
Our counſeil was not long for to ſeche;
Us thought it was not worth to make it wiſe,
And granted him withouten more aviſe,
And bad him ſay his verdit as him leſte.
Lordinges, (quod he) now herkeneth for the beſte;
But take it nat, I pray you, in diſdain:
This is the point, to ſpeke it plat and plain,
That eche of you to ſhorten with youre way
In this viage ſhal tellen Tales tway,
To Canterbury ward I mene it ſo,
And homeward he ſhall tellen other two,
Of aventures that whilom han befalle.
And which of you that bereth him beſt of alle,
That is to ſayn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of beſt ſentence and moſt ſolas,
Shall have a ſouper at youre aller coſt
Here in this place ſitting by this poſt,
Whan that ye comen agen from Canterbury.
And for to maken you the more mery
I wol my ſelven gladly with you ride,
Right at min owen coſt, and be your gide,
And who that wol my jugement withſay
Shal pay for alle we ſpenden by the way.
And if ye vouchefauf that it be ſo,
Telle me anon withouten wordes mo,
And I wol erly ſhapen me therfore.
This thing was granted, and our othes ſwore
With ful glad herte, and praiden him alſo
That he wold vouchefauf for to don ſo,
And that he wolde ben our governour,
And of our Tales juge and reportour,
And ſette a ſouper at a certain pris,
And we wol reuled ben at his deviſe
In highe and lowe*: and thus by on aſſent
We ben accorded to his jugement;

* *In*, or, *De alto et baſſo*, barb Lat. *Haut et bas*, Fr. were expreſſions of entire ſubmiſſion on one ſide, and ſovereignty on the other.

And therupon the win was fette anon:
We dronken, and to reſte wenten eche on
Withouten any lenger tarying.
A morwe whan the day began to ſpring
Up roſe our Hoſte, and was our aller cok,
And gaderd us togeder in a flok,
And forth we riden a litel more than pas
Unto the watering of Seint Thomas,
And ther our Hoſte began his hors areſt,
And ſaid, Lordes, herkeneth if you leſt:
Ye wete your forword, and I it record:
If even ſong and morwe ſong accord,
Let ſe now who ſhal telle the firſt Tale:
As ever mote I drinken win or ale
Who ſo is rebel to my jugement
Shal pay for alle that by the way is ſpent.
Now draweth cutte or that ye forther twinne;
He which that hath the ſhorteſt ſhal beginne.
Sire Knight, (quod he) my maiſter and my lord,
Now draweth cutte, for that is min accord.
Cometh nere (quod he) my Lady Priórceſſe
And ye fire Clerk; let be your ſhamefaſtneſſe,
Ne ſtudieth nought: lay hand to every man.
Anon to drawen every wight began,
And ſhortly for tellen as it was,
Were it by aventure, or ſort, or cas,
The ſothe is this, the cutte fell on the Knight,
Of which ful blith and glad was every wight;
And tell he muſt his Tale as was reſon,
By forword and by compoſition,
As ye han herd; what needeth wordes mo?
And whan this good man ſaw that it was ſo,
As he that wiſe was and obedient
To kepe his forword by his free aſſent,
He ſaide; Sithen I ſhal begin this game,
What, welcome be the cutte a Goddes name.
Now let us ride, and hearkeneth what I ſay.
And with that word we riden forth our way;
And he began with a right mery chere
His Tale anon, and ſaide as ye ſhal here.

THE KNIGHTES TALE.

Whilom, as olde ſtories teſſen us,
Ther was a duk that highte Theſeus;
Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
And in his time ſwiche a conquerour,
That greter was ther non under the ſonne;
Ful many a riche contree had he wonne.
What with his wiſdom and his chevalrie
He conquerd all the regne of Feminie,
That whilom was ycleped Scythia,
And wedded the freſhe quene Ipolita,
And brought hire home with him to his contree
With mochel glorie and great ſolempnitee,
And eke hire yonge ſuſter Emelie.
And thus with victorie and with melodie
Let I this worthy duk to Athenes ride,
And all his hoſt in armes him beſide.
And certes, if it n'ere to long to here,
I wolde have told you fully the manere
How wonnen was the regne of Feminie
By Theſeus and by his chevalrie,
And of the grete bataille for the nones
Betwix Athenes and the Amaſones,
And how aſſeged was Ipolita,
The faire hardy quene of Scythia,
And of the feſte that was at hire wedding,
And of the temple at hire home coming;
But all this thing I moſte as now forbere:
I have, God wot, a large feld to ere,
And weke ben the oxen in my plow:
The remenent of my Tale is long ynow.
I wil not letten eke non of this route;
Let every felaw telle his Tale aboute,
And let ſe now who ſhal the ſouper winne.
Ther as I left I will agen beginne.
This duk, of whom I made mentioun,
Whan he was comen almoſt to the toun,
In all his wele and in his moſte pride,
He was ware, as he caſt his eye aſide,
Wher that ther kneled in the highe wey
A compagnie of ladies twey and twey,
Eche after other, clad in clothes blake;
But ſwiche a crie and ſwiche a wo they make,
That in this world n'is creature living
That ever herd ſwiche another waimenting;
And of this crie ne wolde they never ſtenten
Till they the reines of his bridel henten.
What folk be ye that at min hôme coming
Perturben ſo my feſte with crying?
Quod Theſeus; have ye ſo grete envie
Of min honour, that thus complaine and crie?
Or who hath you miſboden or offended?
Do telle me, if that it may be amended,
And why ye be thus clothed all in blake?
The oldeſt lady of hem all than ſpake,
Whan ſhe had ſwouned with a dedly chere,
That it was reuthe for to ſeen and here.
She ſayde, Lord, to whom Fortune hath yeven
Victorie, and as a conqueror to liven,
Nought greveth us your glorie and your honour,
But we beſeke you of mercie and ſocour:
Have mercie on our woe and our diſtreſſe:
Some drope of pitee thurgh thy gentilleſſe
Upon us wretched wimmen let now falle;
For certes, Lord, ther n'is non of us alle
That ſhe n'hath ben a ducheſſe or a quene;
Now be we caitives, as it is wel ſene:
Thanked be Fortune and hire falſe whele
That non eſtat enſureth to be wele.
And certes, Lord, to abiden your preſence,
Here in this temple of the goddeſſe Clemence,
We han ben waiting all this fourtenight:
Now helpe us, Lord, ſin it lieth in thy might.
I wretched wight, that wepe and waile thus,
Was whilom wif to King Capaneus
That ſtarfe at Thebes, curſed be that day;
And alle we that ben in this aray,
And maken all this lamentation,
We loſten all our huſbondes at that toun,
While that the ſiege therabouten lay:
And yet now the olde Creon, wala wa!
That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
Fulfilled of ire and of iniquittee,
He for deſpit, and for his tyrannie,
To don the ded bodies a vilanie,
Of alle our lordes, which that ben yſlawe,
Hath alle the bodies on an hepe ydrawe,
And will not ſuffren hem by non aſſent
Neyther to ben yberied ne ybrent,
But maketh houndes ete hem in deſpite.
And with that word, withouten more reſpite,
They fallen groff, and crien pitouſly,
Have on us wretched wimmen ſom mercy,
And let our ſorwe ſinken in thin herte.
This gentil duk doun from his courſer ſterte
With herte piteous whan he herd hem ſpeke;
Him thoughte that his herte wolde all to-breke
When he ſaw hem ſo pitous and ſo mate
That whilom weren of ſo gret eſtate,
And in his armes he hem all up hente,
And hem comforted in ful good entente,
And ſwore his oth, as he was trewe knight,
He wolde don ſo ferforthly his might
Upon the tyrant Creon hem to wreke,
That all the peple of Grece ſhulde ſpeke

How Creon was of Theſeus yſerved,
As he that hath his deth ful wel deſerved.
And right anon, withouten more abode,
His banner he diſplaide, and forth he rode
To Thebes ward, and all his hoſt beſide:
No ner Athenes n'olde he go ne ride,
Ne take his eſe fully half a day,
But onward on his way that night he lay,
And ſent anon Ipolita the quene,
And Emelie hire younge ſiſter ſhene,
Unto the toun of Athenes for to dwell;
And forth he rit; ther n'is no more to tell.
The red ſtatue of Mars, with ſpere and targe,
So ſhineth in his white banner large,
That all the feldes gliteren up and doun;
And by his banner borne is his penon
Of gold ful riche, in which that ther was ybete
The Minotaure which that he ſlew in Crete.
Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,
And in his hoſt of chevalrie the flour,
Til that he came to Thebes, and alight
Fayre in a feld, ther as he thought to fight.
But ſhortly for to ſpeken of this thing,
With Creon, which that was of Thebes king
He fought, and ſlew him manly as a knight
In plaine bataille, and put his folk to flight;
And by aſſaut he wan the citee after,
And rent adoun bothe wall, and ſparre, and raſter;
And to the ladies he reſtored again
The bodies of hir houſbondes that were ſlain,
To don the obſequies, as was tho the giſe.
But it were all to long for to deviſe
The grete clamour and the waimenting
Whiche that the ladies made at the brenning
Of the bodies, and the gret honour
That Theſeus, the noble conquerour,
Doth to the ladies whan they from him wente;
But ſhortly for to telle is min entente.
Whan that this worthy duk, this Theſeus,
Hath Creon ſlain and wonnen Thebes thus,
Still in the feld he toke all night his reſte;
And did with all the countree as him leſte:
To ranſake in the tas of bodies dede,
Hem for to ſtripe of harneis and of wede,
The pillours dide hir beſineſſe and cure,
After the bataille and diſcomfiture;
And ſo befell that in the tas they found,
Thurgh girt with many a grevous blody wound,
Two yonge knightes ligging by and by,
Bothe in on armes wrought ful richely;
Of whiche two Arcita highte that on,
And he that other highte Palamon.
Not fully quik ne fully ded they were,
But by hir cote armure and by hir gere
The heraudes knew him wel in ſpecial,
As tho that weren of the blod real
Of Thebes and of ſuſtren two yborne.
Out of the tas the pillours han hem torne,
And han hem carried ſoft unto the tente
Of Theſeus, and he ful ſone hem ſente
To Athenes, for to dwellen in priſon
Perpetuel, he n'olde no raunſon.
And whan this worthy duk had thus ydon,
He toke his hoſt, and home he rit anon,
With laurel crouned as a conquerour,
And ther he liveth in joye and in honour
Terme of his lif; what nedeth wordes mo?
And in a tour in anguiſh and in wo
Dwellen this Palamon and eke Arcite
For evermo, ther may no gold hem quite.
Thus paſſeth yere by yere, and day by day,
Till it fell ones in a morwe of May
That Emelie, that fayrer was to ſene
Than is the lilie upon his ſtalke grene,
And freſher than the May with floures new,
(For with the roſe colour ſtrof hire hewe;
I n'ot which was the finer of hem two)
Er it was day, as ſhe was wont to do,
She was ariſen, and all redy dight,
For May wol have no ſlogardie a night;
The ſeſon priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his ſlepe to ſterte,
And ſayth, Ariſe, and do thin obſervance.
This maketh Emelie han remembrance
To don honour to May, and for to riſe;
Yclothed was ſhe freſhe for to deviſe,
Hire yelwe here was broided in a treſſe
Behind hire back, a yerde long I geſſe;
And in the gardin at the ſonne upriſt
She walketh up and doun wher as hire liſt:
She gathereth floures, partie white and red,
To make a ſotel gerlond for hire hed;
And as an angel hevenlich ſhe ſong.
The grete tour that was ſo thikke and ſtrong,
Which of the caſtel was the chef dongeon,
(Wher as theſe knightes weren in priſon,
Of which I tolde you, and tellen ſhal)
Was even joinant to the gardin wall,
Ther as this Emelie had hire playing. [ing
Bright was the ſonne and clere that morwen-
And Palamon, this woful priſoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler
Was riſen, and romed in a chambre on high,
In which he all the noble citee ſigh,
And eke the gardin, ful of branches grene,
Ther as this freſhe Emelia the ſhene
Was in hire walk, and romed up and doun.
This forweful priſoner, this Palamon,
Goth in his chambre roming to and fro,
And to himſelfe complaining of his wo:
That he was borne ful oft he ſayd Alas!
And ſo befell, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a window thikke of many a barre
Of yren gret, and ſquare as any ſparre,
He caſt his eyen upon Emelia,
And therwithal he blent * and cried A!
As though he ſtongen were unto the herte:
And with that crie Arcite anon up ſterte,
And ſaide, Coſin min, what eyleth thee
That art ſo pale and dedly for to ſee?
Why crideſt thou? who hath thee don offence?
For Goddes love take all in patience

* This word has various ſenſes in Chaucer, as it is derived from blinnan, *ceſſare*; blindan, *cæcare*; or blendan, *miſcere*. It ſeems here to be uſed in a fourth ſenſe, the ſame in which Shakeſpeare uſes the verb to blench, *i. e.* to ſhrink or ſtart aſide. *Johnſon's Dict.* in v. *Blench.* See *Gloſſ.* in v. *Blent*, part. of *Blench.*

Our priſon, for it may non other be;
Fortune hath yeven us this adverſite:
Som wikke aſpect or diſpoſition
Of Saturne, by ſom conſtellation,
Hath yeven us this, although we had it ſworn:
So ſtood the heven whan that we were born:
We moſte endure; this is the ſhort and plain.
This Palamon anſwerde, and ſayde again,
Coſin, forſoth of this opinion
Thou haſt a vaine imagination:
This priſon cauſed me not for to crie,
But I was hurt right now thurghout min eye
Into min herte, that wol my bane be:
The fayrneſſe of a lady that I ſe
Yond in the gardin roming to and fro
Is cauſe of all my crying and my wo:
I n'ot, whe'r ſhe be woman or goddeſſe,
But Venus is it ſothly as I geſſe.
And therwithall on knees adoun he fill,
And ſayde; Venus, if it be your will
You in this gardin thus to transfigure,
Beforn me ſorweful wretched creature,
Out of this priſon helpe that we may ſcape;
And if ſo be our deſtine be ſhape
By eterne word to dien in priſon,
Of our lignage have ſome compaſſion,
That is ſo low ybrought by tyrannie.
And with that word Arcita gan eſpie
Wher as this lady romed to and fro,
And with that ſight hire beaute hurt him ſo,
That if that Palamon were wounded ſore
Arcite is hurt as moche as he or more:
And with a ſigh he ſayde pitouſly,
The freſhe beaute ſleth me ſodenly
Of hire that rometh in the yonder place;
And but I have hire mercie and hire grace,
That I may ſeen hire at the leſte way,
I n'am but ded; ther n'is no more to ſay.
This Palamon, whan he theſe wordes herd,
Diſpitouſly he loked, and anſwerd,
Whether ſayeſt thou this in erneſt or in play?
Nay, quod Arcite, in erneſt by my fay;
God helpe me ſo, me luſt full yvel play.
This Palamon gan knit his browes twey.
It were, quod he, to thee no gret honour
For to be falſe, ne for to be traytour
To me, that am thy coſin and thy brother
Yſworne ful depe, and eche of us to other,
That never for to dien in the peine
Til that the deth departen ſhal us tweine,
Neyther of us in love to hindre other,
Ne in non other cas, my leve brother;
But that thou ſhuldeſt trewely forther me
In every cas as I ſhuld forther thee.
This was thin oth, and min alſo certain;
I wot it wel thou darſt it not withſain:
Thus art thou of my conſeil out of doute,
And now thou woldeſt falſly ben aboute
To love my lady whom I love and ſerve,
And ever ſhal til that min herte ſterve.
Now certes, falſe Arcite, thou ſhalt not ſo:
I loved hire firſte, and tolde thee my wo.
As to my conſeil, and my brother ſworne
To forther me as I have told beforne,
For which thou art ybounden as a knight
To helpen me, if it lie in thy might,
Or elles art thou falſe I dare wel ſain.
This Arcita full proudly ſpake again.
Thou ſhalt, quod he, be rather falſe than I,
And thou art falſe, I tell thee utterly;
For *par amour* I loved hire firſt or thou.
What wolt thou ſayn? thou wiſteſt nat right now
Whether ſhe were a woman or a goddeſſe:
Thin is affection of holineſſe,
And min is love as to a creature,
For which I tolde thee min aventure,
As to my coſin and my brother ſworne.
I poſe that thou lovedeſt hire beforne:
Woſt thou not wel the olde clerkes ſawe †,
That who ſhall give a lover any lawe?
Love is a greter lawe by my pan
Then may be yeven of any erthly man;
And therfore poſitif lawe and ſwiche decree
Is broken all day for love in eche degree.
A man moſte nedes love maugre his hed;
He may not fleen it though he ſhuld be ded,
All be ſhe maid, or widewe, or elles wif.
And eke it is not likely all thy lif
To ſtonden in hire grace, no more ſhal I;
For wel thou woſt thy ſelven verailly
That thou and I be damned to priſon
Perpetuel; us gaineth no raunſon.
We ſtrive as did the houndes for the bone,
They fought all day, and yet hir part was none:
Ther came a kyte, while that they were ſo wrothe,
And bare away the bone betwix hem bothe.
And therfore at the kinges court, my brother,
Eche man for himſelf, ther is non other.
Love if thee luſt, for I love, and ay ſhal;
And ſothly, leve brother, this is al.
Here in this priſon moſten we endure,
And everich of us take his aventure.
Gret was the ſtrif, and long betwix him twey,
If that I hadde leiſer for to ſey:
But to th' effect. It happed on a day,
(To tell it you as ſhortly as I may)
A worthy duk that highte Perithous,
That felaw was to this duk Theſeus
Sin thilke day that they were children lite,
Was come to Athenes his felaw to viſite,
And for to play as he was wont to do,
For in this world he loved no man ſo,
And he loved him as tendrely again:
So wel they loved, as olde bokes ſain,
That whan that on was dede, ſothly to tell,
His felaw wente and ſought him doun in hell;
But of that ſtorie liſt me not to write.
Duk Perithous loved wel Arcite,
And had him knowe at Thebes yere by yere;
And finally, at requeſt and praiere
Of Perithous, withouten any raunſon,
Duk Theſeus him let out of priſon,

† The olde clerk is Boethius, from whoſe book *De Conſolatione*, Chaucer has borrowed largely in many places. The paſſage alluded to is in l. ii. met. 12.
Quis legem det amantibus?
Major lex amor eſt ſibi.

Frely to gon wher that him lift over all,
In ſwiche a giſe as I you tellen ſhall.
This was the forword, plainly for to endite,
Betwixen Theſeus and him Arcite;
That if ſo were that Arcite were yfound
Ever in his lif, by day or night, o ſtound
In any countree of this Theſeus,
And he were caught, it was accorded thus,
That with a ſwerd he ſhulde leſe his hed;
Ther was non other remedie ne rede;
But taketh his leve, and homeward he him ſpedde:
Let him beware, his nekke lieth to wedde.
How gret a ſorwe ſuffereth now Arcite?
The deth he feleth thurgh his herte ſmite;
He wepeth, waileth, crieth pitouſly,
To ſleen himſelf he waiteth prively.
He ſaid, Alas the day that I was borne!
Now is my priſon werſe than beſorne;
Now is me ſhape eternally to dwelle
Not only in purgatorie but in helle.
Alas! that ever I knew Perithous,
For elles had I dwelt with Theſeus,
Yfetered in his priſon evermo;
Than had I ben in bliſſe and not in wo:
Only the ſight of hire whom that I ſerve,
Though that I never hire grace may deſerve,
Wold have ſufficed right ynough for me.
O dere coſin Palamon, quod he,
Thin is the victorie of this aventure;
Ful blisful in priſon maieſt thou endure:
In priſon? certes nay, but in paradiſe.
Wel hath Fortune yturned thee the diſe,
That haſt the ſight of hire and I th' abſence.
For poſſible is, ſin thou haſt hire preſence,
And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
That by ſome cas, ſin Fortune is changeable,
Thou maieſt to thy deſir ſomtime atteine:
But that I am exiled, and barreine
Of alle grace, and in ſo gret deſpaire,
That ther n'is erthe, water, fire, ne aire,
Ne creature, that of hem maked is,
That may me hele or don comfort in this,
Wel ought I ſterve in wanhope and diſtreſſe.
Farewel my lif, my luſt, and my gladneſſe.
Alas! why plainen men ſo in commune
Of purveiance of God or of Fortune,
That yeveth hem ful oft in many a giſe
Wel better than they can hemſelf deviſe?
Som man deſireth for to have richeſſe,
That cauſe is of his murdre or gret ſikneſſe;
And ſom man wold out of his priſon fayn,
That in his houſe is of his meynie ſlain.
Infinite harmes ben in this matere:
We wote not what thing that we praien here.
We faren as he that dronke is as a mous:
A dronken man wot wel he hath an hous,
But he ne wot which is the right way thider,
And to a dronken man the way is ſlider,
And certes in this world ſo faren we.
We ſeken faſt after felicite,
But we go wrong ful often trewely.
Thus we may ſayen alle, and namely I,
That wende, and had a gret opinion,
That if I might eſcapen fro priſon
Than I had ben in joye and parfite hele,
Ther now I am exiled fro my wele.
Sin that I may not ſeen you Emelie
I n'am but ded; ther n'is no remedie.
Upon that other ſide Palamon,
Whan that he wiſt Arcita was agon,
Swiche ſorwe he maketh, that the grete tour
Reſouned of his yelling and clamour.
The pure fetters on his ſhinnes grete
Were of his bitter ſalte teres wete.
Alas! quod he, Arcita, coſin min,
Of all our ſtrif, God wot, the frute is thin.
Thou walkeſt now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my wo thou yeveſt litel charge.
Thou maiſt, ſith thou haſt wiſdom and manhede,
Aſſemblen all the folk of our kinrede,
And make a werre ſo ſharpe on this contree,
That by ſom aventure or ſom tretee
Thou maiſt have hire to lady and to wif
For whom that I muſt nedes leſe my lif.
For as by way of poſſibilitee,
Sith thou art at thy large of priſon free,
And art a lord, gret is thin avantage,
More than is min, that ſterve here in a cage:
For I may wepe and waile while that I live,
With all the wo that priſon may me yeve,
And eke with peine that love me yeveth alſo,
That doubleth all my tourment and my wo.
Therwith the fire of jalouſie up ſterte
Within his breſt, and hent him by the herte
So woodly, that he like was to behold
The box-tree, or the aſhen ded and cold.
Then ſaid he; O cruel Goddes! that governe
This world with binding of your word eterne,
And writen in the table of athamant
Your parlement and your eterne grant,
What is mankind more unto yhold
Than is the ſhepe that rouketh in the fold?
For ſlain is man right as another beeſt,
And dwelleth eke in priſon and arreſt,
And hath ſikneſſe and gret adverſite,
And often times giltеles parde.
What governance is in this preſcience
That giltеleſs turmenteth innocence?
And yet encreſeth this all my penance,
That man is bounden to his obſervance
For Goddes ſake to leten of his will,
Ther as a beeſt may all his luſt fulfill.
And when a beeſt is ded he hath no peine;
But man after his deth mote wepe and pleine,
Though in this world he have care and wo:
Withouten doute it maye ſtonden ſo.
The anſwer of this lete I to divines,
But wel I wote that in this world gret pine is.
Alas! I ſee a ſerpent or a theſe,
That many a trewe man hath do meſcheſe,
Gon at his large, and wher him luſt may turn.
But I muſte ben in priſon thurgh Saturn,
And eke thurgh Juno, jalous and eke wood
That hath wel neye deſtruied all the blood
Of Thebes, with his waſte walls wide.
And Venus ſleeth me on that other ſide
For jalouſie, and fere of him Arcite.
Now wol I ſtent of Palamon a lite,

And leten him in his prison still dwelle,
And of Arcita forth I wol you telle.
The sommer passeth, and the nightes long
Encresen double wise the peines strong
Both of the lover and of the prisoner;
I n'ot which hath the wofuller mistere
For shortly for to say, this Palamon
Perpetuelly is damned to prison,
In chaines and in fetters to ben ded;
And Arcite is exiled on his hed
For evermore as out of that contree,
Ne never more he shal his lady see.
You lovers axe I now this question,
Who hath the werse, Arcite or Palamon?
That on my se his lady day by day,
But in prison moste he dwellen alway:
That other wher him lust may ride or go,
But sen his lady shal he never mo.
Now demeth as you liste, ye that can,
For I wil tell you forth as I began.
When that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
Ful oft a day he swelt and said Alas!
For sen his lady shal he never mo.
And shortly to concluden all his wo,
So mochel sorwe hadde never creature
That is or shal be while the world may dure.
His slepe, his mete, his drinke, is him byraft,
That lene he wex, and drie as is a shaft.
His eyen holwe, and grisly to behold,
His hewe falwe, and pale as ashen cold,
And solitary he was, and ever alone,
And wailing all the night, making his mone:
And if he herde song or instrument,
Than would he wepe, he mighte not be stent.
So feble were his spirites, and so low,
And changed so, that no man coude know
His speche ne his vois, though men it herd.
And in his gere, for all the world he ferd
Nought only like the lovers maladie,
Of Ereos, but rather ylike manie,
Engendred of humours melancolike,
Beforne his hed in his celle fantastike.
And shortly turned was all up so doun
Both habit and eke disposition
Of him, this woful lover Dan Arcite,
What should I all day of his wo endite?
Whan he endured had a yere or two
This cruel torment, and this peine and wo,
At Thebes, in his contree, as I said,
Upon a night in slepe as he him laid,
Him thought how that the winged god Mercury
Beforne him stood, and bad him to be mery.
His slepy yerde in hond he bare upright;
An hat he wered upon his heres bright:
Arraied was this god (as he toke kepe)
As he was whan that Argus toke his slepe,
And said him thus; To Athenes shalt thou wende;
Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.
And with that word Arcite awoke and stert.
Now trewely how sore that ever me smert.
Quod he, to Athenes right now wol I fare;
Ne for no drede of deth shall I not spare
To se my lady, that I love and serve;
In hire presence I rekke not to sterve.
And with that word he caught a gret mirrour,
And saw that changed was all his colour,
And saw his visage all in another kind:
And right anon it ran him in his mind,
That sith his face was so disfigured
Of maladie the which he had endured,
He mighte wel, if that he bare him lowe,
Live in Athenes evermore unknowe,
And sen his lady wel nigh day by day.
And right anon he changed his aray,
And clad him as a poure labourer.
And all alone, save only a squier,
That knew his privite and all his cas,
Which was disguised pourely as he was,
To Athenes is he gone the nexte way.
And to the court he went upon a day,
And at the gate he proffered his service,
To drugge and draw what so men wold devise.
And shortly of this matere for to sayn,
He fell in office with a chamberlain,
The which that dwelling was with Emelie,
For he was wise, and coude sone espie
Of every servent which that served hire:
Wel coude he hewen wood, and water bere,
For he was yonge and mighty for the nonce,
And therto he was strong and big of bones
To don that any wight can him devise.
A yere or two he was in this service,
Page of the chambre of Emelie the bright,
And Philostrate he sayde that he hight.
But half so wel beloved a man as he
Ne was ther never in court of his degre.
He was so gentil of conditioun,
That thurghout all the court was his renoun.
They sayden that it were a charite
That Theseus wold enhaunse his degre,
And putten him in worshipful service,
Ther as he might his vertues exercise.
And thus within a while his name is spronge
Both of his dedes and of his good tonge,
That Theseus had taken him so ner
That of his chambre he made him a squier,
And gave him gold to mainteine his degre;
And eke men brought him out of his contre
Fro yere to yere ful prively his rent;
But honestly and sleighly he it spent,
That no man wondred how that he it hadde.
And thre yere in this wise his lif he ladde,
And bare him so in pees and eke in werre
Ther n'as no man that Theseus hath derre.
And in this blisse let I now Arcite,
And speke I wol of Palamon a lite.
In derkenesse and horrible and strong prison
This seven yere hath sitten Palamon,
Forpined, what for love and for distresse.
Who feleth double sorwe and hevinesse
But Palamon? that love distraineth so,
That wood out of his wit he goth for wo,
And eke therto he is a prisonere
Perpetuell, not only for a yere.
Who coude time in Englisth properly
His martirdom? forsoth it am not I,
Therfore I passe as lightly as I may.
It fell that in the seventh yere, in May

The thridde night, (as olde bokes ſayn,
That all this ſtorie tellen more plain)
Were it by aventure or deſtinee,
(As when a thing is ſhapen it ſhal be)
That ſone after the midnight Palamon,
By helping of a frend, brake his priſon,
And fleeth the cite faſte as he may go,
For he had yeven drinke his gayler ſo,
Of a clarre made of a certain wine,
With narcotikes and opie of Thebes fine, [ſhake,
That all the night though that men wold him
The gailer ſlept, he mighte not awake:
And thus he fleeth as faſte as ever he may.
The night was ſhort, and faſte by the day,
That nedes coſt he moſte himſelven hide;
And to a grove faſte ther beſide
With dredful foot than ſtalketh Palamon:
For ſhortly this was his opinion,
That in that grove he wold him hide all day,
And in the night than wold he take his way
To Thebes ward, his frendes for to preie
On Theſeus to helpen him werreie:
And ſhortly, eyther he wold leſe his lif
Or winnen Emelie unto his wif:
This is the effect, and his entente plein.
Now wol I turnen to Arcite agein,
That litel wiſt how neighe was his care,
Till that Fortune had brought him in the ſnare.
The beſy larke, the meſſager of day,
Salewith in hire ſong the morwe gray,
And firy Phebus riſeth up ſo bright,
That all the orient laugheth of the ſight,
And with his ſtremes drieth in the greves
The ſilver dropes hanging on the leves.
And Arcite, that is in the court real
With Theſeus the ſquier principal,
Is riſen, and loketh on the mery day;
And for to don his obſervance to May,
Remembring on the point of his deſire,
He on his courſer, ſterting as the fire,
Is ridden to the feldes him to pley,
Out of the court, were it a mile or twey;
And to the grove of which that I you told
By aventure his way he gan to hold,
To maken him a gerlond of the greves,
Were it of woodbind or of hauthorn leves,
And loud he ſong agen the ſonne ſhene.
Maye, with all thy flours and thy grene,
Right welcome be thou faire freſhe May,
I hope that I ſome grene here getten may.
And from his courſer with a luſty herte
Into the grove ful haſtily he ſterte,
And in a path he romed up and doun,
Ther as by aventure this Palamon
Was in a buſh, that no man might him ſe,
For ſore afered of his deth was he.
Nothing ne knew he that it was Arcite:
God wot he wold have trowed it ful lite.
But ſoth is ſaid, gon ſithen are many yeres,
That feld hath eyen, and the wood hath eres,
It is ful faire a man to bere him even
For al day meten men at unſet ſteven.
Ful litel wote Arcite of his felaw,
That was ſo neigh to herken of his ſaw,
For in the buſh he ſitteth now ful ſtill.
Whan that Arcite had romed all his fill,
And ſongen all the roundel luſtily,
Into a ſtudie he fell ſodenly,
As don theſe lovers in hir queinte geres,
Now in the crop, and now down in the breres
Now up, now doun, as boket in a well.
Right as the Friday, ſothly for to tell,
Now ſhineth it, and now it raineth faſt;
Right ſo can gery Venus overcaſt
The hertes of hire folk, right as hire day
Is gerfull, right ſo changeth ſhe aray.
Selde is the Friday all the weke ylike.
Whan Arcite hadde yſonge, he gan to ſike,
And ſet him doun withouten any more;
Alas! (quod he) the day that I was bore!
How longe, Juno, thurgh thy cruelkee
Wilt thou werreien Thebes the citee?
Alas! ybrought is to confuſion
The blood real of Cadme and Amphion:
Of Cadmus, which that was the firſte man
That Thebes built, or firſte the toun began,
And of the citee firſte was crouned king,
Of his linage am I, and his ofspring
By veray line, as of the ſtok real;
And now I am ſo caitif and ſo thral,
That he that is my mortal enemy
I ſerve him as his ſquier pourely.
And yet doth Juno me wel more ſhame,
For I dare not beknowe min owen name,
But ther as I was wont to highte Arcite,
Now highte I Ahiloſtrat not worth a mite,
Alas! thou fell Mars, alas! thou Juno,
Thus hath your ire our linage all fordo,
Save only me and wretched Palamon,
That Theſeus martireth in priſon.
And over all this, to ſlen me utterly,
Love hath his firy dart ſo brenningly
Yſtiked thurgh my trewe careful hert,
That ſhapen was my deth erſt than my ſhert.
Ye ſlen me with your eyen Emelie;
Ye ben the cauſe wherfore that I die.
Of all the remenant of min other care
Ne ſet I not the mountance of a tare,
So that I coud don ought to your pleance.
And with that word he fell doun in a trance
A longe time, and afterward up ſterte.
This Palamon, that thought thurghout his herte
He felt a colde ſwerd ſodenly glide;
For ire he quoke, no lenger wolde he hide:
And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
As he were wood, with face ded and pale,
He ſterte him up out of the buſhes thikke
And ſayde; Falſe Arcite, falſe traitour wicke,
Now art thou hent, that loveſt my lady ſo,
For whom that I have all this peine and wo,
And art my blood, and to my conſeil ſworn,
As I ful oft have told thee herebeforn,
And haſt beiaped here Duk Theſeus,
And falſely changed haſt thy name thus;
I wol be ded, or elles thou ſhalt die:
Thou ſhalt not love my lady Emelie,
But I wol love hire only and no mo,
For I am Palamon thy mortal fo.

And though that I no wepen have in this place,
But out of priſon am aſtert by grace,
I drede nought that eyther thou ſhalt die
Or thou ne ſhalt nat loven Emelie:
Chefe which thou wolt, for thou ſhalt not aſterte.
This Arcite, tho with ful diſpitous herte,
Whan he him knew, and had his tale herd,
As fers as a leon pulled out a ſwerd,
And ſayde thus; By God that ſitteth above,
N'ere it that thou art ſike and wood for love,
And eke that thou no wepen haſt in this place,
Thou ſhuldeſt never out of this grove pace,
That thou ne ſhuldeſt dien of min hond;
For I defie the ſuretee and the bond
Which that thou ſaiſt that I have made to thee.
What! veray fool, thinke wel that love is free,
And I wol love hire maugre all thy might.
But for thou art a worthy gentil knight,
And wilneſt to darraine hire by bataille,
Have here my trouth, to morwe I will not faille,
Withouten weting of any other wight,
That here I wol be founden as a knight,
And bringen harneis right ynough for thee,
And chefe the beſte, and leve the werſte for me.
And mete and drinke this night wol I bring
Ynough for thee, and cloathes for thy bedding;
And if ſo be that thou my lady win,
And ſle me in this wode, ther I am in,
Thou maiſt wel have thy lady as for me.
This Palamon anſwered, I grant it thee:
And thus they ben departed till a morwe.
When eche of hem hath laid his faith to borwe.
O Cupide! out of alle charitee,
O regne! that wolt no felaw have with thee,
Ful ſoth is ſayde, that love ne lordſhip
Wol nat his thankes have no felawſhip.
Wel finden that Arcite and Palamon.
Arcite is ridden anone unto the toun,
And on the morwe, or it were day light,
Ful prively two harneis hath he dight,
Both ſuffiſant and mete to darreine
The bataille in the field betwix hem tweine;
And on his hors, alone as he was borne,
He carieth all this harneis him beforne;
And the grove, at time and place yſette,
This Arcite and this Palamon ben mette.
Tho changen gan the colour in hir face,
Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace
That ſtondeth at a gappe with a ſpere,
Whan hunted is the lion or the bere,
And hereth him come ruſhing in the greves,
And breking bothe the boughes and the leves.
And thinketh here cometh my mortal enemy,
Withouten faile he muſt be ded or I:
For eyther I mote ſlain him at the gappe,
Or he mote ſlen me if that me miſhappe.
So ferden they in changing of hir hewe,
As fer as eyther of hem other knewe.
Ther n' as no good day, ne no ſaluing,
But ſtreit withouten wordes reherſing
Everich of hem halpe to armen other
As frendly as he were his owen brother;
And after that with ſharpe ſperes ſtrong
They foineden eche at other wonder long.
Thou mighteſt wenen that this Palamon
In his fighting were as wood leon,
And as a cruel tigre was Arcite:
As wilde bores gan they togeder ſmite,
That frothen white as ſome for ire wood;
Up to the ancle foughte they in hir blood;
And in this wiſe I let hem fighting dwelle,
And forth I wol of Theſeus you telle.
The deſtinee, miniſtre general,
That executeth in the world over al
The purveiance that God hath ſen beforne,
So ſtrong it is, that though the world hath ſworne
The contrary of a thing by ya or nay,
Yet ſomtime it ſhall fallen on a day
That falleth nat efte in a thouſand yere
For certainly our appetites here,
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
All is this ruled by the ſight above.
This mene I now by mighty Theſeus,
That for to hunten is ſo deſirous,
And namely at the grete hart in May,
That in his bed ther daweth him no day
That he n'is clad, and redy for to ride
With hunte and horne, and houndes him beſide;
For in his hunting hath he ſwiche delite,
That it is all his joye and appetite
To ben himſelf the grete harts bane;
For after Mars he ſerveth now Diane.
Clere was the day, as I have told or this,
And Theſeus, with alle joye and blis,
With his Ipolitia, the fayre quene,
And Emelie, yclothed all in grene,
On hunting ben thy ridden really:
And to the grove, that ſtood ther faſte by,
In which ther was an hart as men him told,
Duk Theſeus the ſtreite way hath hold,
And to the launde he rideth him ful right,
Ther was the hart ywont to have his flight,
And over a brooke, and ſo forth on his wey.
This duk wol have a cours at him or twey
With houndes, ſwiche as him luſt to commaunde.
And when this duk was comen to the launde,
Under the ſonne he loked, and anon
He was ware of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breme, as it were bolles two;
The brighte ſwerdes wenten to and fro
So hidouſly that with the leſte ſtroke
It ſemed that it wolde felle an oke,
But what they weren nothing he ne wote:
This duk his courſer with his ſporres ſmote,
And at a ſtert he was betwix hem two,
And pulled out a ſwerd and cried, Ho!
No more, up peine of leſing of your hed;
By mighty Mars he ſhall anon be ded
That ſmiteth any ſtroke that I may ſen!
But telleth me what miſtere men ye ben,
That ben ſo hardy for to fighten here
Withouten any juge or other officere,
As though it were in liſtes really.
This Palamon anſwered haſtily
And ſaide; Sire, what nedeth wordes mo?
We have the deth deſerved bothe two:
Two woful wretches ben we, two caitives,
That ben accombred of our owen lives,

And as thou art a ſightful lord and juge
Ne yeve us neyther mercie ne refuge;
And ſle me firſt for ſeinte charitee,
But ſle my felaw eke as wel as me;
Or ſle him firſt, for though thou know it lite,
This is thy mortal ſo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is baniſhed on his hed,
For which he hath deſerved to be ded;
For this is he that came unto thy gate,
And ſayde that he highte Philoſtrate.
Thus hath he japed thee ful many a yere,
And thou haſt maked him thy chief ſquiere,
And this is he that loveth Emelie.
For ſith the day is come that I ſhal die
I make plainly my confeſſion,
That I am thilke woful Palamon.
That hath thy priſon broken wilfully:
I am thy mortal ſo, and it am I
That loveth ſo hot Emelie the bright.
That I wold dien preſent in hire ſight,
Therfore I axe deth and my iewiſe,
But ſle my felaw in the ſame wiſe,
For both we have deſerved to be ſlain.
This worthy duk anſwerd anon again,
And ſayd, This is a ſhort concluſion;
Your owen mouth, by your confeſſion,
Hath damned you, and I wol it recorde;
It nedeth not to pine you with the corde:
Ye ſhul be ded by mighty Mars the Rede.
The quene anon for veray womanhede
Gan for to wepe, and ſo did Emelie,
And all the ladies in the compagnie.
Gret pite was it, as it thought hem alle,
That ever ſwiche a chance ſhulde befalle,
For gentil men they were of gret eſtat,
And nothing but for love was this debat;
And ſawe hir blody woundes wide and ſore,
And alle criden bothe leſſe and more,
Have mercie Lord upon us wimmen alle,
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,
And wold have kiſt his feet ther as he ſtood,
Till at the laſt aſlaked was his mood;
(For pitee renneth ſone in gentil herte)
And though he firſt for ire quoke and ſterte,
He had conſidered ſhortly in a clauſe
The treſpas of hem both, and eke the cauſe;
And although that his ire hir gilt accuſed,
Yet in his reſon he hem both excuſed;
As thus; he thoughte wel that every man
Wol helpe himſelf in love if that he can,
And eke deliver himſelf out of priſon;
And eke his herte had compaſſion
Of wimmen, for they wepten ever in on,
And in his gentil herte he thoughte anon,
And ſoft unto himſelf he ſayed, Fie
Upon a lord that wol have no mercie,
But be a leon both in word and dede,
To hem that be in repentance and drede,
As wel as to a proud diſpitous man
That wol maintainen that the firſt began.
That lord hath litel of diſcretion
That in ſwiche cas can no diviſion,
But weyheth pride and humbleſſe after on.
And ſhortly whan his ire is thus agon,
He gan to loken up with eyen light,
And ſpake theſe ſame wordes all on highte:
The god of Love, a *benedicite!*
How mighty and how grete a lord is he?
Again his might ther gainen non obſtacles,
He may be cleped a God for his miracles,
For he can maken at his owen giſe
Of everich herte as that him liſt deviſe.
Lo here this Arcite, and this Palamon,
That quitely weren out of my priſon,
And might have lived in Thebes really,
And weten I am hir mortal enemy,
And that hir deth lith in my might alſo,
And yet hath love, maugre hir eyen two,
Ybrought hem hither both for to die;
Now loketh, is not this an heigh folie?
Who may ben a fool, but if that be love?
Behold for Goddes ſake that ſitteth above,
So how they blede! be they not wel araied?
Thus hath hir lord, the god of Love, hem paied
Hir wages, and hir fees for hir ſeryice,
And yet they wenen for to be ful wiſe
That ſerven Love for ought that may befalle,
And yet is this the beſte game of alle,
That ſhe for whom they have this jolite
Can hem therfore as mochel thank as me.
She wot no more of alle this hote fare,
By God, than wot a cuckow or an hare.
But all mote ben aſſaied hote or cold;
A man mote ben a fool other yonge or old;
I wot myſelf ful yore agon,
For in my time a ſervant was I on;
And therefore ſith I know of loves peine,
And wot how ſore it can a man deſtreine,
As he that oft hath been caught in his las,
I you foryeve all holly this treſpas,
At requeſt of the quene that kneleth here,
And eke of Emelie, my ſuſter dere,
And ye ſhul both anon unto me ſwere
That never mo ye ſhul my contree dere,
Ne maken werre upon me night ne day,
But ben my frendes in alle that ye may.
I you foryeve this treſpas every del.
And they him ſware his axing fayr and wel,
And him of lordſhip and of mercie praid,
And he hem granted grace, and thus he ſaid:
To ſpeke of real linage and richeſſe,
Though that ſhe were a quene or a princeſſe,
Eche of you bothe is worthy doutelés
To wedden whan time is, but natheles,
I ſpeke as for my ſuſter Emelie,
For whom ye have this ſtrif and jalouſie,
Ye wot yourſelf ſhe may not wedden two
At ones, though ye fighten evermo;
But on of you, al be him loth or leſe,
He mot gon pipen in an ivy leſe:
This is to ſay, ſhe may not have you bothe,
Al be ye never ſo jalous ne ſo wrothe,
And forthy I you put in this degree,
That eche of you ſhall have his deſtinee
As him is ſhape, and herkneth in what wiſe;
Lo here your ende of that I ſhal deviſe.
My will is this for plat concluſion
Withouten any replication,

If that you liketh, take it for the beſte,
That everich of you ſhal gon wher him leſte
Freely withouten raunſon or dangere.
And this day fifty wekes, ferre ne nere,
Everich of you ſhal bring an hundred knightes,
Armed for liſtes up at alle rightes,
Alle redy to darrein hire by bataille.
And this behete I you withouten faille
Upon my trouth, and as I am a knight,
That whether of you bothe hath that might,
This is to ſayn, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I ſpake of now,
Sle his contrary, or out of liſtes drive,
Him ſhall I yeven Emelie to wive
To whom that Fortune yeveth ſo fayr a grace.
The liſtes ſhal I maken in this place,
And God ſo wiſly on my ſoule rewe,
As I ſhal even juge ben and trewe.
Ye ſhal non other ende with me maken
That on of you ne ſhall be ded or taken;
And if you thinketh this is wel yſaid,
Saith your avis, and holdeth you apaid:
This is your ende and your concluſion,
Who loketh lightly now but Palamon?
Who ſpringeth up for joye but Arcite?
Who coud it tell, or who coud it endite,
The joye that is maked in the place
Whan Theſeus hath don ſo fayre a grace?
But doun on knees went every manere wight,
And thanked him with all hir hertes might,
And namely theſe Thebanes often ſith.
And thus with good hope and with herte blith
They taken hir leve, and homeward gan they ride
To Thebes, with his olde walles wide.
I trowe men wolde deme it negligence
If I foryete to tellen the diſpence
Of Theſeus, that goth ſo buſily
To maken up the liſtes really,
That ſwiche a noble theatre as it was
I dare wel ſayn in all this world ther n'as:
The circuite a mile was aboute
Walled of ſtone, and diched all withoute;
Round was the ſhape, in maneré of a compas
Ful of degrees, the hight of ſixty pas,
That whan a man was ſet on o degree
He letted not his felaw for to ſee.
Eſtward ther ſtood a gate of marbel white,
Weſtward right ſwiche another in th' oppoſite;
And ſhortly to concluden, ſwiche a place
Was never in erthe in ſo litel a ſpace,
For in the lond ther n'as no craftes man
That geometrie or arſemetrike can,
Ne portreiour, ne kerver of images,
That Theſeus ne yaf him mete and wages
The theatre for to maken and deviſe.
And for to don his rite and ſacrifice
He eſtward hath upon the gate above,
In worſhip of Venus goddeſſe of Love,
Don make an auter and an oratorie,
And weſtward, in the minde and in memorie
Of Mars he maked hath right ſwiche another,
That coſte largely of gold a fother:
And northward, in a touret on the wall,
Of alabaſtre white and red corall
An oratorie riche for to ſee,
In worſhip of Diane of chaſtitee,
Hath Theſeus don wrought in noble wiſe.
But yet had I foryetten to deviſe
The noble kerving and the portreitures,
The ſhape, the contenance, of the figures
That weren in theſe oratories three.
Firſt in the temple of Venus maiſt thou ſee
Wrought on the wall, ful pitous to beholde,
The broken ſlepes, and the ſikes colde,
The ſacred teres, and the waimentinges,
The firy ſtrokes of the deſirinyes,
That Loves ſervantes in this lif enduren;
The othes that hir covenants aſſuren.
Pleſance and Hope, Deſire, Foolhardineſſe,
Beaute and Youthe, Baudrie and Richeſſe,
Charmes and Force, Leſinges and Flaterie,
Diſpence, Beſineſſe, and Jalouſie,
That wered of yelwe goldes a gerlond,
And hadde a cuckow ſitting on hire hond,
Feſtes, inſtruments, and caroles and dances,
Luſt and array, and all the circumſtances
Of Love, which that I reken and reken ſhall,
By ordre weren peinted on the wall,
And mo than I can make of mention:
For ſothly all the mount of Citheron,
Ther Venus hath hire principal dwelling,
Was ſhewed on the wall in purtreying,
With all the gardin, and the luſtineſſe:
Nought was foryetten the porter Idelneſſe,
Ne Narciſſus the fayre of yore agon,
Ne yet the folie of King Salemon,
Ne yet the grete ſtrengthe of Hercules.
Th' enchantment of Medea and Circes,
Ne of Turnus the hardy fiers corage,
The riche Creſus caitif in ſervage.
Thus may ye ſeen that wiſdom ne richeſſe,
Beaute ne ſleighte, ſtrengthe ne hardineſſe,
Ne may with Venus holden champartie,
For as hire liſte the world may ſhe gie.
Lo, all theſe folk ſo caught were in hire las
Til they for wo ful often ſaid Alas!
Sufficeth here enſamples on or two,
And yet I coude reken a thouſand mo.
The ſtatue of Venus, glorious for to ſee,
Was naked fleting in the large ſee,
And fro the navel doun all covered was
With wawes grene, and bright as any glas.
A citole in hire right hand hadde ſhe,
And on hire hed, ful ſemely for to ſee,
A roſe gerlond freſh and wel ſmelling,
Above hire hed hire doves fleckering:
Before hire ſtood hire ſone Cupido,
Upon his ſhoulders wirges had he two,
And blind he was, as it is often ſene;
A bow he bare and arwes bright and kene.
Why ſhulde I not as wel eke tell you all
The purtreiture that was upon the wall
Within the temple of mighty Mars the Rede?
All peinted was the wall in length and brede
Like to the eſtres of the griſly place
That highte the gret temple of Mars in Trace,
In thilke colde and froſty region,
Ther as Mars hath his ſoverein manſion.

Firſt on the wall was peinted a foreſt,
In which ther wonneth neyther man ne beſt,
With knotty knarry barrein trees old
Of ſtubbes ſharpe and hidous to behold,
In which ther ran a romble and a ſwough,
As though a ſtorme ſhuld breſten every bough;
And dounward from an hill under a bent
Ther ſtood the temple of Mars Armipotent,
Wrought all of burned ſtele, of which th' entree
Was longe and ſtreite, and ghaſtly for to ſee;
And therout came a rage and ſwiche a viſe
That it made all the gates for to riſe.
The northern light in at the dore ſhone,
For window on the wall ne was ther none
Thurgh which men mighten any light diſcerne:
The dore was all of athamant eterne,
Yclenched overthwart and endelong
With yren tough, and for to make it ſtrong,
Ever piler the temple to ſuſtene
Was tonne-gret, of yren bright and ſhene.
Ther ſaw I firſt the derke imagining
Of Felonie, and alle the compaſſing;
The cruel ire, red as any glede,
The pikepurſe, and eke the pale drede,
The ſmiler with the knif under the cloke,
The ſhepen brening with the blake ſmoke,
The treſon of the mordring in the bedde,
The open werre, with woundes all bebledde;
Conteke with blody knif and ſharp manace:
All full of chirking was that ſorry place.
The ſleer of himſelf yet ſaw I there,
His herte blood hath bathed all his here;
The naile ydriven in the ſhode on hight,
The cold deth, with mouth gaping upright.
Amiddes of the temple ſate Miſchance,
With diſcomfort and ſorry contenance;
Yet ſaw I Woodneſſe laughing in his rage,
Armed Complaint, Outhees, and fires Outrage;
The carraine in the buſh, with throte ycorven;
A thouſand ſlain, and not of qualme yſtorven;
The tirant, with the prey by force yraft;
The toun deſtroied, ther was nothing laft:
Yet ſaw I brent the ſhippes hoppeſteres,
The hunte yſtrangled with the wilde beres;
The ſow freting the child right in the cradel,
The coke yſcalled for all his long ladel:
Nought was foryete by th' infortune of Marte
The carter overridden with his carte;
Under the wheel ful low he lay adoun.
Ther were alſo of Martes diviſion
Th' armerer and the bowyer, and the ſmith,
That forgeth ſharp ſwerdes on his ſtith;
And all above depeinted in a tour
Saw I a Conqueſt, ſitting in gret honour,
With thilke ſharp ſwerd over his hed
Yhanging by a ſubtil twined thred.
Depeinted was the ſlaughter of Julius,
Of gret Nero and of Antonius:
All be that thilke time they were unborne,
Yet was hir deth depeinted ther beforne,
By menacing of Mars, right by figure,
So was it ſhewed in that purtreiture
As is depeinted in the cercles above,
Who ſhal be ſlaine or elles ded for love.
Sufficeth on enſample in ſtories olde;
I may not reken hem alle though I wolde.
The ſtatue of Mars upon a carte ſtood
Armed, and loked grim as he were wood,
And over his hed ther ſhinen two figures
Of ſterres that ben cleped in ſcriptures,
That on Puella, that other Rubeus.
This god of Armes was araied thus;
A wolf ther ſtood beforne him at his fete
With eyen red, and of a man he ete:
With ſubtil penſil peinted was this ſtorie,
In redouting of Mars and of his glorie.
Now to the temple of Diane the chaſte
As ſhortly as I can I wol me haſte,
To tellen you of the deſcriptioun,
Depeinted by the walles up and doun,
Of hunting and of ſhamefaſt chaſtitee.
Ther ſaw I how woful Caliſtope,
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a woman til a bere,
And after was ſhe made the lodeſterre:
Thus was it peinted, I can ſay no ferre;
Hire ſone is eke a ſterre as men may ſee.
Ther ſaw I Dane yturned til a tree,
I mene not hire the goddeſſe Diane,
But Peneus daughter, which that highte Dane.
Ther ſaw I Atteon an hart ymaked,
For vengeance that he ſaw Diane all naked:
I ſaw how that his houndes have him caught,
And freten him, for that they knew him naught.
Yet peinted was a litel forthermore
How Athalante hunted the wilde bore,
And Meleagre, and many another mo,
For which Diane wroughte hem care and wo.
Ther ſaw I many another wonder ſtorie,
The which me liſte not drawen to memorie.
This goddeſſe on an hart ful heye ſete,
With ſmale houndes all about hire fete,
And undernethe hire feet ſhe hadde a mone,
Wexing it was, and ſhulde wanen ſone.
In gaudy grene hire ſtatue clothed was,
With bow in hond, and arwes in a cas.
Hire eyen caſte ſhe ful low adoun,
Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.
A woman travailling was hire beforne,
But for hire childe ſo longe was unborne
Ful pitouſly Lucina gan ſhe call,
And ſayed; Helpe, for thou mayeſt beſte of all.
Wel coude he peinten lifly that it wrought,
With many a florein he the hewes bought.
Now ben theſe liſtes made, and Theſeus
That at his grete coſt arraied thus
The temples, and the theatre everidel,
Whan it was don him liked wonder wel.
But ſtint I wol of Theſeus a lite,
And ſpeke of Palamon and of Arcite.
The day approcheth of hir returning,
That everich ſhuld an hundred knightes bring,
That bataille to derreine, as I you told;
And til Athenes hir covenant for to hold,
Hath everich of hem brought an hundred knightes
Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.
And ſikerly ther trowed many a man
That never ſithen that the world began,

As for to ſpeke of knighthood of hir hond,
As fer as God hath meked ſee and lond,
N'as of ſo fewe ſo noble a compagnie;
For every wight that loved chevalrie,
And wold his thankes han a paſſant name,
Hath praied that he might ben of that game,
And wel was him that therto choſen was,
For if ther fell to-morwe ſuch a cas,
Ye knowen wel that every luſty knight
That loveth *par amour*, and hath his might,
Were it in Englelond or elleſwher,
They wold hir thankes willen to be ther.
To fight for a lady, a *benedicite!*
It were a luſty ſighte for to ſe.
And right ſo ferden they with Palamon.
With him ther wenten knightes many on;
Som wol ben armed in an habergeon,
And in a breſt plate, and in a gipon;
And ſom wol have a pair of plates large,
And ſom wol have a Pruce ſheld or a targe;
Som wol ben armed on hir legges wele,
And have an axe, and ſome a mace of ſtele.
Ther n'is no newe guiſe that it n'as old.
Armed they weren as I have you told,
Everich after his opinion.
Ther maiſt thou ſe coming with Palamon
Licurge himſelf, the grete King of Trace;
Blake was his berd, and manly was his face;
The cercles of his eyen in his hed
They gloweden betwixen yelwe and red,
And like a griffon loked he about,
With kemped heres on his browes ſtout;
His limmes gret, his braunes hard and ſtronge,
His ſhouldres brode, his armes round and longe;
And as the guiſe was in his contree,
Ful highe upon a char of gold ſtood he.
With foure white bolles in the trais.
Inſtede of cote armure on his harnais,
With nayles yelwe, and bright as any gold,
He hadde a beres ſkin, cole-blake for old.
His longe here was kempt behind his bak,
As any ravenes fether it ſhone for blake.
A wreth of gold arm-gret, of huge weight,
Upon his hed ſate ful of ſtones bright,
Of fine rubins and of diamants.
About his char ther wenten white alauns,
Twenty and mo, as gret as any ſtere,
To hunten at the leon or the dere,
And folwed him, with moſel faſt ybound,
Colered with gold, and torettes filed round.
An hundred lordes had he in his route
Armed full wel, with hertes ſterne and ſtoute.
With Arcita, in ſtories as men find,
The gret Emetrius the King of Inde,
Upon a ſtede bay, trapped in ſtele,
Covered with cloth of gold diapred wele,
Came riding like the god of armes Mars;
His cote armure was of a cloth of Tars,
Couched with perles white, and round, and grete;
His ſadel was of brent gold new ybete;
A mantelet upon his ſhouldres hanging
Bret-ful of rubies red, as fire ſparkling;
His criſpe here like ringes was yronne,
And that was yelwe, and glitered as the ſonne;
His noſe was high, his eyen bright citrin,
His lippes round, his colour was ſanguin,
A fewe fraknes in his face yſpreint,
Betwixen yelwe and blake ſomdel ymeint,
And as a leon he his loking caſte,
Of five-and-twenty yere his age I caſte;
His berd was wel begonnen for to ſpring,
His vois was as a tromþe thondering;
Upon his hede he wered of laurer grene,
A gerlond freſhe and luſty for to ſene;
Upon his hond he bare for his deduit
An egle tame, as any lily whit:
An hundred lordes had he with him there,
All armed ſave hir hedes in all hir gere,
Ful richely in alle manere thinges;
For truſteth wel that erles, dukes, kinges,
Were gathered in this noble compagnie,
For love and for encreſe of chevalrie.
About this king ther ran on every part
Ful many a tame leon and leopart.
And in this wiſe theſe lordes all and ſome
Ben on the Sonday to the citee come
Abouten prime, and in the toun alight.
This Theſeus, this duk, this worthy knight,
Whan he had brought hem into his citee,
And inned hem everich at his degree,
He feſteth hem, and doth ſo gret labour
To eſen hem, and don hem all honour,
That yet men wenen that no mannes wit
Of non eſtat ne coud amenden it.
The minſtralcie, the ſervice at the feſte,
The grete yeftes to the moſt and leſte,
The riche array of Theſeus paleis,
Ne who ſate firſt ne laſt upon the deis,
What ladies fayreſt ben or beſt dancing,
Or which of hem can carole beſt or ſing,
Ne who moſt felingly ſpeketh of love,
What haukes ſitten on the perche above,
What houndes liggen on the floor adoun,
Of all this now make I no mentioun.
But of the effect, that thinketh me the beſte;
Now cometh the point, and herkeneth if you leſte.
The Sonday nighte or day began to ſpring,
Whan Palamon the larke herde ſing,
Although it n'ere not day by houres two,
Yet ſang the larke, and Palamon right tho
With holy herte, and with an high corage
He roſe, to wenden on his pilgrimage
Unto the bliſsful Citherea benigne,
I mene Venus, honourable and digne.
And in hire houre he walketh forth a pas
Unto the liſtes, ther hire temple was,
And doun he kneleth, and with humble chere
And herte ſore he ſayde as ye ſhul here:
Fayreſt of fayre, o lady min Venus,
Daughter to Jove, and ſpouſe of Vulcanus,
Thou glader of the Mount of Citheron!
For thilke love thou haddeſt to Adon,
Have pitee on my bitter teres ſmert,
And take myn humble prair at thin herte.
Alas! I ne have no langage to tell
The effecte ne the torment of min hell;
Min herte may min harmes not bewrey;
I am ſo confuſe that I cannot ſay:

But mercy, lady bright! that knoweſt wele
My thought, and ſeeſt what harmes that I ſele:
Conſider all this, and rue upon my ſore,
As wiſly as I ſhal for evermore
Emforth my might thy trewe ſervant be,
And holden werre alway with chaſtite;
That make I min avow ſo ye me helpe,
I kepe nought of armes for to yelpe,
Ne axe I nat to-morwe to have victorie,
Ne renoun in this cas, ne vaine glorie
Of pris of armes, blowen up and doun,
But I wold have fully poſſeſſioun
Of Emelie, and die in her ſerviſe;
Find thou the manere how, and in what wiſe.
I rekke not but it may better be
To have victorie of hem, or they of me
So that I have my lady in min armes;
For though ſo be that Mars is god of Armes,
Your vertue is ſo grete in heven above,
That if you liſte I ſhal wel have my love.
Thy temple wol I worſhip evermo,
And on thin auter, wher I ride or go,
I wol don ſacrifice, and fires bete.
And if ye wol not ſo, my lady ſwete!
Than pray I you to-morwe with a ſpere
That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere;
Than rekke I not when I have loſt my lif
Though that Arcita win hire to his wif.
This is the effecte and ende of my praiere,
Yeve me my love thou bliſsful lady dere!

When the oriſon was don of Palamon
His ſacrifice he did, and that anon,
Ful pitouſly, with alle circumſtances,
All tell I not as now his obſervances.
But at the laſt the ſtatue of Venus ſhoke,
And made a ſigne whereby that he toke
That his praiere accepted was that day;
For though the ſigne ſhewed a delay,
Yet wiſt he wel that granted was his bone,
And with glad herte he went him home ful ſone.

The thridde hour inequal that Palamon
Began to Venus temple for to gon.
Up roſe the ſonne, and up roſe Emelie,
And to the temple of Diane gan hie.
Hire maydens that ſhe thider with hire ladde
Ful redily with hem the fire they hadde,
Th' encenſe, the clothes, and the remenant all,
That to the ſacrifice longen ſhall,
The hornes ful of mede, as was the giſe;
Ther lakked nought to don hire ſacrifiſe.
Smoking the temple, ful of clothes fayre,
This Emelie with herte debonaire
Hire body weſhe with water of a well,
But how ſhe did hire rite I dare not tell,
But it be any thing in general,
And yet it were a game to heren all;
To him that meneth wel it n'ere no charge;
But it is good a man to ben at large.
Hire bright here kembed was, untreſſed all;
A coroune of a grene oke cerial
Upon hire hed was ſet ful fayre and mete:
Two fires on the auter gan ſhe bete,
And did hire thinges as men may behold
In Stace of Thebes, and theſe bokes old.

Whan kindled was the fire, with pitous chere
Unto Diane ſhe ſpoke as ye may here:

O chaſte goddeſſe of the wodes grene,
To whom both heven, and erthe, and ſee, is ſene,
Quene of the regne of Pluto derke and lowe,
Goddeſſe of maydens, that min herte haſt knowe
Ful many a yere, and woſt what I deſire,
As kepe me fro thy vengeance and thin ire,
That Atteon aboughte cruelly!
Chaſt goddeſſe! wel woteſt thou that I
Deſire to ben a mayden all my lif,
Ne never wol I be no love ne wif:
I am (thou woſt) yet of thy compagnie,
A mayde, and love hunting and venerie,
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
And not to ben a wif and be with childe;
Nought wol I knowen compagnie of man;
Now helpe me, Lady, ſith you may and can,
For though three formes that thou haſt in thee:
And Palamon that hath ſwiche love to me,
And eke Arcite, that loveth me ſo ſore,
This grace I praie thee withouten more,
As ſende love and pees betwix em two,
And fro me torne away hir hertes ſo,
That all hir hote love and hir deſire,
And all hir beſy torment and hir fire
Be queinte, or torned in another place.
And if ſo be thou wolt not do me grace,
Or if my deſtinee be ſhapen ſo
That I ſhal nedes have on of hem two,
As ſende me him that moſt defireth me.

Beholde, goddeſſe of clene Chaſtite,
The bitter teres that on my chekes fall:
Sin thou art mayde, and keper of us all,
My maydenhede thou kepe and well conſerve,
And while I live a mayde I wol thee ſerve.

The fires brenne upon the auter clere
While Emelie was thus in hire praiere,
But ſodenly ſhe ſaw a ſighte queinte;
For right anon on of the fires quiente
And quiked again, and after that anon
That other fire was queinte and all agon,
And as it queinte it made a whiſteling
As don theſe brondes wet in hir brenning;
And at the brondes ende outran anon
As it were blody dropes many on;
For which ſo ſore agaſt was Emelie,
That ſhe was wel neigh mad, and gan to crie,
For ſhe ne wiſte what it ſignified,
But only for the fere thus ſhe cried
And wept, that it was pitee for to here.

And there withall Diane gan appere
With bowe in hond, right as an huntereſſe,
And ſayde, Doughter, ſtint thin hevineſſe.
Among the goddes highe it is affermed,
And by eterne word written and confermed,
Thou ſhalt be wedded unto on of tho
That han for thee ſo mochel care and wo,
But unto which of hem I may not tell.
Farewel, for here I may no longer dwell;
The fires which that on min auter brenne
Shal thee declaren er that thou go henne
Thin aventure of love as in this cas.

And with that word the arwes in the cas

Of the goddeſſe clatteren faſt and ring,
And forth ſhe went and made a vaniſhing,
For which this Emelie aſtonied was,
And ſayde, What amounteth this, alas!
I putte me in thy protection
Diane, and in thy diſpoſition.
And home ſhe goth anon the nexte way.
This is the effecte; ther n'is no more to ſay.
The nexte houre of Mars folwing this
Arcite unto the temple walked is
Of fierce Mars, to don his ſacrifiſe
With all the rites of his payen wiſe.
With pitous herte and high devotion
Right thus to Mars he ſayde his oriſon:
O ſtronge God, that in the regnes cold
Of Trace honoured art, and lord yhold,
And haſt in every regne and every lond
Of armes all the bridel in thin hond,
And hem fortuneſt as thee liſt deviſe,
Accept of me my pitous ſacrifiſe!
If ſo be that my youthe may deſerve,
And that my might be worthy for to ſerve
Thy godhed, that I may ben on of thine,
Than praie I thee to rewe upon my pine,
For thilke peine and thilke hote fire
In which thou whilom brendeſt for deſire
Whanne that thou uſedeſt the beautee
Of fayre yonge Venus freſhe and free,
And haddeſt hire in armes at thy wille;
Although the ones on a time misfille,
When Vulcanus had caught thee in his las,
And ſond thee ligging by his wif, alas!
For thilke ſorwe that was tho in thin herte
Have reuthe as wel upon my peines ſmerte.
I am yonge and unkonning as thou woſt,
And, as I trow, with love offended moſt
That ever was ony lives creature;
For ſhe that doth me all this wo endure
Ne recceth never whether I ſinke or flete;
And wel I wot or ſhe me mercy hete
I muſte with ſtrengthe win hire in the place;
And wel I wot withouten helpe or grace
Of thee ne may my ſtrengthe not availle;
Than helpe me, Lord, to-morwe in my batailles,
For thilke fire that whilom brenned thee,
As wel as that this fire now brenneth me,
And do, that I to-morwe may han victorie:
Min be the travaille and thin be the glorie.
Thy ſoveraine temple wol I moſt honouren
Of ony place, and alway moſt labouren
In thy plefance and in thy craftes ſtrong;
And in thy temple I wol my baner hong,
And all the armes of my compagnie,
And evermore until that day I die
Eterne fire I wol beſorne thee find;
And eke to this avow I wol be bind.
My berd, my here that hangeth long adoun,
That never yet felt non offenſioun
Of raſour ne of ſhere I wol thee yeve,
And ben thy trewe ſervant while I live.
Now, Lord, have reuthe upon my ſorwes ſore;
Yeve me the victorie; I axe thee no more.
The praier ſtint of Arcite the ſtronge,
The ringes on the temple dore that honge,
And eke the dores, clatterden ful faſt,
Of which Arcita ſomwhat him agaſt.
The fires brent upon the auter bright
That it gan all the temple for to light;
A ſwote ſmell anon the ground up yaf,
And Arcita anon his hond up haf,
And more enſcenſe into the fire he caſt,
With other rites mo, and at the laſt
The ſtatue of Mars began his hauberke ring,
And with that ſoun he herd a murmuring
Ful low and dim, that ſaid thus, Victorie;
For which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.
And thus with joye and hope wel to fare
Arcite anon unto his inne is fare
As fayn as foul is of the brighte ſonne.
And right anon ſwiche ſtrif ther is begonne
For thilke granting in the heven above
Betwixen Venus the goddeſſe of Love,
And Mars the ſterne god Armipotent,
That Jupiter was beſy it to ſtent,
Til that the pale Saturnus the Colde,
That knew ſo many of aventures olde,
Fond in his olde experience and art
That he ful ſone hath pleſed every part.
As ſooth is ſayd, elde hath gret avantage;
In elde is both wiſdom and uſage:
Men may the old out-renne but not out-rede.
Saturne anon, to ſtenten ſtrif and drede,
Albeit that it is again his kind,
Of all this ſtrif he gan a remedy find.
My dere doughtere Venus! quod Saturne,
My cours that hath ſo wide for to turne
Hath more power than wot any man.
Min is the drenching in the ſee ſo wan,
Min is the priſon in the derke cote,
Min is the ſtrangel and hanging by the throte,
The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,
The groyning, and the prive empoyſoning.
I do vengeance and pleine correction
While I dwell in the ſigne of the Leon.
Min is the ruine of the highe halles,
The falling of the toures and of the walles
Upon the minour or the carpenter;
I ſlew Samſon in ſhaking the piler.
Min ben alſo the maladies colde,
The derke treſons and the caſtes olde:
My loking is the fader of Peſtilence.
Now wepe no more, I ſhal do diligence
That Palamon, that is thin owen knight,
Shal have his lady, as thou haſt him hight.
Thogh Mars ſhal help his knight yet nathele,
Betwixen you ther mot ſometime be pees:
All be ye not of o complexion
That cauſeth all day ſwiche diviſion.
I am thin ayel, redy at thy will;
Wepe now no more, I ſhall thy luſt fulfill.
Now wol I ſtenten of the goddes above,
Of Mars and of Venus goddeſſe of Love,
And tellen you as plainly as I can
The gret effect for which that I began.
Gret was the feſte in Athenes thilke day,
And eke the luſty ſeſon of that May
Made every wight to ben in ſwiche plefance,
That all that Monday juſten they and dance,
And ſpenden it in Venus highe ſervife;
But by the cauſe that they ſhulden riſe

Erly a-morwe for to ſeen the fight,
Unto hir reſte wenten they at night.
And on the morwe whan the day gan ſpring
Of hors and harneis noiſe and clattering
Ther was in the hoſtelries all aboute,
And to the paleis rode ther many a route
Of lordes upon ſtedes and palfreis.
Ther mayeſt thou ſee deviſing of harneis
So uncouth and ſo riche, and wrought ſo wele
Of goldſmithry, of brouding and of ſtele;
The ſheldes brighte, teſteres, and trappures,
Gold-hewen helmes, hauberkes, cote armures;
Lordes in parementes on hir courſeres,
Knightes of retenue, and eke ſquieres,
Nailing the ſperes, and helmes bokeling,
Guiding of ſheldes, with lainers lacing;
Ther as nede is they weren nothing idel:
The fomy ſtedes on the golden bridel
Gnawing, and faſt the armures alſo
With file and hammer priking to and fro;
Yemen on foot, and communes many on
With ſhorte ſtaves, thicke as they may gon;
Pipes, trompes, nakeres, and clariounes,
That in the battaille blowen blody ſounes;
The paleis ful of peple up and doun,
Here three, ther ten, holding hir queſtioun,
Devining of theſe Theban knightes two,
Som ſayden thus, ſom ſayde it ſhall be ſo;
Som helden with him with the blacke berd,
Som with the balled, ſom with the thick herd;
Som ſaide he loked grim, and wolde fighte;
He hath a ſparth of twenty pound of wighte.
Thus was the halle full of devining
Long after that the ſonne gan up ſpring.
The gret Theſeus that of his ſlepe is waked
With minſtralcie and noiſe that was maked,
Held yet the chambre of his paleis riche,
Til that the Theban knightes bothe yliche
Honoured were, and to the paleis fette.
Duk Theſeus is at a window ſette.
Araied right as he were a god in trone:
The peple preſeth thiderward ful ſone,
Him for to ſeen and don high reverence,
And eke to herken his heſte and his ſentence.
An heraud on a ſcaffold made an O,
Til that the noiſe of the peple was ydo,
And whan he ſaw the peple of noiſe al ſtill
Thus ſhewed he the mighty dukes will.
The lord hath of his high diſcretion
Conſidered that it were deſtruction
To gentil blood to fighten in the giſe
Of mortal bataille now in this empriſe;
Wherefore to ſhapen that they ſhul not die,
He wol his firſte purpos modifie.
No man therefore, up peine of loſſe of lif,
No maner ſhot ne pollax ne ſhort knif
Into the liſtes ſend or thider bring,
Ne ſhort ſwerd for to ſtike with point biting,
No man ne draw ne bere it by his ſide;
Ne no man ſhal unto his felaw ride
But o cours, with a ſharpe ygrounden ſpere;
Foin if him liſt on foot, himſelf to were:
And he that is at meſchief ſhal be take,
And not ſlaine, but be brought unto the ſtake
That ſhal ben ordeined on eyther ſide;
Thider he ſhal by force, and ther abide:
And if ſo fall the chevetain be take
On eyther ſide, or elles ſleth his make,
No longer ſhal the tourneying ylaſt.
God ſpede you; goth forth and lay on faſt:
With longe ſwerd and with maſe fighteth your fill,
Goth now your way; this is the lordes will.
The vois of the peple touched to the heven,
So loude crieden they with mery ſteven,
God ſave ſwiche a lord that is ſo good,
He wilneth no deſtruction of blood.
Up gon the trompes and the melodie,
And to the liſtes rit the compagnie
By ordinance, thurghout the cite large,
Hanged with cloth of gold and not with ſarge.
Ful like a lord this noble duk gan ride,
And theſe two Thebans upon eyther ſide,
And after rode the quene and Emelie,
And after that another compagnie
Of on and other after hir degree;
And thus they paſſen thurghout the citee,
And to the liſtes comen they be time:
It n'as not of the day yet fully prime.
Whan ſet was Theſeus ful riche and hie,
Ipolita the quene, and Emelie,
And other ladies in degrees aboute,
Unto the ſetes preſeth all the route.
And weſtward thurgh the gates under Mart
Arcite, and eke the hundred of his part,
With baner red, is entred right anon;
And in the ſelve moment Palamon
Is, under Venus, eſtward in the place,
With baner white, and hardy chere and face.
In all the world to ſeken up and doun,
So even without variatioun
Ther n'ere ſwiche compagnies never twey;
For ther was non ſo wiſe that coude ſey
That any hadde of other avantage
Of worthineſſe, ne of eſtat ne age,
So even were they choſen for to geſſe:
And in two renges fayre they hem dreſſe.
Whan that hir names red were everich on,
That in her nombre gile were ther non,
Tho were the gates ſhette, and cried was loude,
Do now your devoir, yonge knightes proude.
The heraudes left hir priking up and doun.
Now ringin trompes loud and clarioun.
Ther is no more to ſay, but eſt and weſt
In gon the ſperes ſadly in the reſt;
In goth the ſharpe ſpore into the ſide:
Ther ſee men who can juſte and who can ride:
Ther ſhiveren ſhaftes upon ſheldes thicke;
He feleth thurgh the herte ſpone the pricke:
Up ſpringen ſperes twenty foot on highte;
Out gon the ſwerdes as the ſilver brighte:
The helmes they to-hewen and to-ſhrede;
Out breſt the blod with ſterne ſtremes rede:
With mighty maces the bones they to-breſte;
He thurgh the thickeſt of the throng gan threſte;
Ther ſtomblen ſtedes ſtrong, and doun goth all;
He rolleth under foot as doth a ball:
He foineth on his foe with a tronchoun,
And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun;

He thurgh the body is hurt, and ſith ytake
Maugre his hed, and brought unto the ſtake,
As forword was, right ther he muſt abide;
Another lad is on that other ſide:
And ſomtime doth hem Theſeus to reſt,
Hem to refreſh and drinken if hem leſt.
Ful oft a day han thilke Thebanes two
Togeder met and wrought eche other wo:
Unhorſed hath eche other of hem twey.
Ther n'as no tigre in the vale of Galaphey,
Whan that hire whelpe is ſtole whan it is lite,
So cruel on the hunt as is Arcite
For jalous herte upon this Palamon;
Ne in Belmarie ther n'is ſo fell leon
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Ne of his prey deſireth ſo the blood,
As Palamon to ſleen his foo Arcite:
The jalous ſtrokes on hir helmes bite;
Out renneth blood on both her ſides rede.
Somtime an ende ther is of every dede;
For er the ſonne unto the reſte went
The ſtrong King Emetrius gan hent
This Palamon, as he fought with Arcite,
And made his ſwerd depe in his fleſh to bite;
And by the force of twenty is he take
Unyolden, and ydrawen to the ſtake:
And in the reſcous of this Palamon
The ſtronge King Licurge is borne adoun;
And King Emetrius for all his ſtrengthe
Is borne out of his ſadel a ſwerdes lengthe,
So hitte him Palamon or he were take:
But all for nought, he was brought to the ſtake:
His hardy herte might him helpen naught;
He moſte abiden whan that he was caught
By force and eke by compoſition.
Who ſorweth now but woful Palamon,
That moſte no more gon again to fight?
And whan that Theſeus had ſeen that ſight
Unto the folk that foughten thus eche on
He cried, Ho! no more, for it is don,
I wol be trewe juge and not partie.
Arcite of Thebes ſhal have Emelie,
That by his fortune hath hire fayre ywonne,
Anon ther is a noiſe of peple begonne
For joye of this ſo loud and high withall
It ſeemed that the liſtes ſhulden fall.
What can now fayre Venus done above?
What ſaith ſhe now? what doth this quene of Love
But wepeth ſo for wanting of hire will
Til that hire teres in the liſtes fill:
She ſayde, I am aſhamed doutelees.
Saturnus ſayde, Daughter, hold thy pees:
Mars hath his will, his knight hath all his bone,
And by min hed thou ſhalt ben eſed ſone.
The trompoures with the loud minſtralcie,
The heraudes, that ſo loude yell and crie,
Ben in hir joye for wele of Dan Arcite,
But herkeneth me, and ſtenteth noiſe a lite,
Whiche a miracle ther befell anon.
This fierce Arcite hath of his helme ydon,
And on a courſer for to ſhew his face
He priketh endelong the large place,
Loking upward upon this Emelie,
And ſhe again him caſt a frendlich eye,
(For women, as to ſpeken in commune,
They folwen all the favour of Fortune)
And was all his in chere as his in herte.
Out of the ground a Fury infernal ſterte,
From Pluto ſent, at requeſte of Saturne,
For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
And lepte aſide, and foundred as he lepe;
And er that Arcite may take any kepe
He pight him on the pomel of his hed,
That in the place he lay as he were ded,
His breſt to-broſten with his ſadel bow;
As blake he lay as any cole or crow,
So was the blood yronnen in his face.
Anon he was yborne out of the place,
With herte ſore, to Theſeus paleis:
Tho was he corven out of his harneis,
And in a bed ybrought ful fayre and blive,
For he was yet in memorie and live,
And alway crying after Emelie.
Duk Theſeus with all his compagnie
Is comen home to Athens his citee
With alle bliſſe and gret ſolempnite.
Al be it that this aventure was falle
He n'olde not diſcomforten hem alle,
Men ſayden eke that Arcite ſhal not die,
He ſhal ben heled of his maladie.
And of another thing they were as fayn,
That of hem alle was ther non yſlain,
Al were they ſore yhurt, and namely on,
That with a ſpere was thirled his breſt bone.
To other woundes and to broken armes
Som hadden ſalves and ſome hadden charmes;
And fermacies of herbes, and eke ſave
They dronken, for they wold hir lives have:
For which this noble duk, as he wel can,
Comforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel all the longe night
Unto the ſtrange lordes, as was right.
Ne ther n'as holden no diſcomforting
But as at juſtes or a tourneying;
For ſothly ther n'as no diſcomfiture,
For falling n'is not but an aventure:
Ne to be lad by force unto a ſtake
Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take,
O perſon all alone, withouten mo,
And haried forth by armes, foot, and too,
And eke his ſtede driven forth with ſtaves,
With footmen, bothe yemen and eke knaves,
It was aretted him no vilanie;
Ther may no man clepen it cowardie.
For which anon Duk Theſeus let crie,
To ſtenten alle rancour and envie,
The gree as wel of o ſide as of other,
And eyther ſide ylike, as others brother;
And yave hem giftes after hir degree,
And helde a feſte fully dayes three;
And conveyed the kinges worthily
Out of his toun a journee largely;
And home went every man the righte way;
Ther n'as no more but Farewel, Have good day.
Of this bataille I wol no more endite,
But ſpeke of Palamon and of Arcite.
Swelleth the breſt of Arcite, and the ſore
Encreſeth at his herte more and more.

The clotered blood for any leche-craft
Corrumpeth, and is in his bouke ylaft,
That neyther veine-blood ne ventouſing,
Ne drinke of herbes, may ben his helping.
The vertue expulſif or animal,
Frothilke v rtue cleped natural,
Ne may the venime voiden ne expell;
The pipes of his longes gan to ſwell,
And every lacerte in his breſt adoun
Is ſhent with venime and corruptioun.
Him gaineth neyther for to get his lif
Vomit upward ne dounward laxatif:
All is to-broſten thilke region;
Nature hath now no domination:
And certainly ther nature wol not werche.
Farewel phyſike; go bere the man to cherche.
This is all and ſom, that Arcite moſte die;
For which he ſendeth after Emelie,
And Palamon, that was his coſin dere;
Than ſayd he thus, as ye ſhuln after here.
Nought may the woful ſpirit in myn herte
Declare o point of all my ſorwes ſmerte
To you my lady, that I love moſt,
But I bequethe the ſervice of my goſt
To you aboven every creature,
Sin that my lif ne may no lenger dure.
Alas the wo! alas the peines ſtrong,
That I for you have ſuffered, and ſo longe!
Alas the deth! alas min Emelie!
Alas departing of our compagnie!
Alas min hertes quene! alas my wif!
Min hertes ladie, ender of my lif!
What is this world? what axen men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Alone withouten any compagnie.
Farewel my ſwete, farewel min Emelie!
And ſoſte take me in your armes twey
For love of God, and herkeneth what I ſey.
I have here with my coſin Palamon
Had ſtrif and rancour many a day agon
For love of you, and for my jalouſie;
And Jupiter ſo wis my ſoule gie,
To ſpeken of a ſervant proprely,
With alle circumſtances trewely,
That is to ſayn, trouth, honour, and knighthede,
Wiſdom, humbleſſe, eſtat, and high kinrede,
Fredom, and all that longeth to that art,
So Jupiter have of my ſoule part,
As in this world right now ne know I non
So worthy to be loved as Palamon,
That ſerveth you, and wol don all his lif;
And if that ever ye ſhal ben a wif,
Foryete not Palamon, the gentil man.
And with that word his ſpeche fail'e began;
For from his feet up to his breſt was come
The cold of deth that had him overnome;
And yet moreover in his armes two
The vital ſtrength is loſt and all ago;
Only the intellect, withouten more,
That dwelled in his herte ſike and ſore,
Gan failen whan the herte felte deth;
Duſked his eyen two, and failled his breth:
But on his ladie yet caſt he his eye;
His laſte word was, Mercy, Emelie!

His ſpirit changed hous, and wente ther
As I cam never I cannat tellen wher;
Therfore I ſtent, I am no diviniſtre;
Of ſoules find I not in this regiſtre:
Ne me luſt not th' opinions to telle
Of hem, though that they written wher they dwelle.
Arcite is cold, ther Mars his ſoule gie.
Now wol I ſpeken forth of Emelie.
Shright Emelie, and houleth Palamon,
And Theſeus his ſiſter toke anon
Swouning, and bare her from the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
To tellen how ſhe wep both even and morwe?
For in ſwiche cas wimmen have ſwiche ſorwe,
Whan that hir houſbonds ben fro hem ago,
That for the more part they ſorwen ſo,
Or elles fallen in ſwiche maladie,
That atte laſte certainly they die.
Infinite ben the ſorwes and the teres
Of olde folk and folk of tendre yeres
In all the toun for deth of this Theban;
For him ther wepeth bothe child and man:
So gret a weping was ther non certain
Whan Hector was ybrought all freſh yſlain
To Troy: alas! the pitee that was there;
Cratching of chekes, rending eke of here.
Why woldeſt thou be ded? thiſe women crie,
And haddeſt gold ynough and Emelie.
No man might gladen this Duk Theſeus
Saving his olde fader Egeus,
That knew this worldes tranſmutation,
As he had ſeen it chaungen up and doun,
Joye after wo, and wo after gladneſſe,
And ſhewed him enſample and likeneſſe.
Right as ther died never man (quod he)
That he ne lived in erth in ſom degree,
Right ſo ther lived never man (he ſeyd)
In all this world that ſomtime he ne deyd:
This world n'is but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we ben pilgrimes paſſing to and fro:
Deth is an end of every worldes ſore.
And over all this yet ſaid he mochel more
To this effect, ful wiſely to enhort
The peple that they ſhuld hem reſomfort.
Duk Theſeus with all his beſy cure
He caſteth now wher that the ſepulture
Of good Arcite may beſt ymaked be,
And eke moſt honourable in his degree;
And at the laſt he toke concluſion
That ther as firſt Arcite and Palamon
Hadden for love the bataille hem betwene,
That in that ſelve grove, ſote and grene,
Ther as he hadde his amorous deſires,
His complaint, and for love his hote fires,
He wolde make a fire, in which the office
Of funeral he might all accompliſe;
And let anon commande to hack and hewe
The okes old, and lay hem on a rew
In culpons, wel araied for to brenne.
His officers with ſwifte feet they renne
And ride anon at his commandement.
And after this, this Theſeus hath ſent
After a bere, and it all overſpradde
With cloth of gold the richeſt that he hadde,

And of the ſame ſuit he cladde Arcite.
Upon his hondes were his gloves white,
Eke on his hed a croune of laurer grene,
And in his hond a ſwerd ful bright and kene.
He laid him bare the viſage on the bere,
Therwith he wept that pitee was to here;
And for the peple ſhulde ſeen him alle,
Whan it was day he brought him to the halle,
That roreth of the crying and the ſoun.
Tho came this woful Theban Palamon
With ſlotery herd and ruggy aſhy heres,
In clothes blake, ydropped all with teres,
And (paſſing over of weping Emelie)
The reufulleſt of all the compagnie.
And in as much as the ſervice ſhuld be
The more noble and riche in his degree,
Duk Theſeus let forth three ſtedes bring,
That trapped were in ſtele all glittering,
And covered with the armes of Dan Arcite;
And eke upon theſe ſtedes gret and white
Ther ſaten folk, of which on bare his ſheld,
Another his ſpere up in his hondes held;
The thridde bare with him his bow Turkeis,
Of brent gold was the cas and the harneis;
And rideu forth a pas with ſorweful chere
Toward the grove, as ye ſhal after here.
The nobleſt of the Grekes that ther were
Upon hir ſhuldres carrieden the bere,
With flacke pas, and eyen red and wete,
Thurghout the citee, by the maiſter ſtrete,
That ſprad was all with black, and wonder hie
Right of the ſame is all the ſtrete ywrie.
Upon the right hand went olde Egeus,
And on that other ſide Duk Theſeus,
With veſſels in hir hond of gold ful fine,
All ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wine;
Eke Palamon with ful gret compagnie,
And after that came woful Emelie
With fire in hond, as was that time the giſe,
To don the office of funeral ſervice.
High labour and ful gret apparailling
Was at the ſervice of that fire making,
That with his grene top the heaven raught,
And twenty fadom of brede the armes ſtraught;
This is to ſain, the boughes were ſo brode.
Of ſtre firſt there was laied many a lode.
But how the fire was maked up on highte,
And eke the names how the trees highte,
As oke, fir, birch, aſpe, alder, holm, poplere,
Wilow, elm, plane, aſh, box, cheſtein, lind, laurere,
Maple, thorn, beche, haſel, ew, whipultre,
How they were feld, ſhal not be told for me;
Ne how the goddes ranneu up and doun
Diſherited of hir habitatioun,
In which they woneden in reſt and pees,
Nimphes, Faunes, and Amidriades;
Ne how the beſtes and the briddes alle
Fledden for fere whan the wood gan falle;
Ne how the ground agaſt was of the light,
That was not wont to ſee the ſonne bright;
Ne how the fire was couched firſt with ſtre,
And then with drie ſtickes cloven a-thre,
And than with grene wood and ſpiceric,
And than with cloth of gold and with perrie,
And gerlonds hanging with ful many a flour,
The mirre, the encenſe alſo with ſwete odour;
Ne how Arcita lay among all this,
Ne what richeſſe about his body is;
Ne how that Emilie, as was the giſe,
Put in the fire of funeral ſervice;
Ne how ſhe ſwouned whan ſhe made the fire,
Ne what ſhe ſpake, ne what was hire deſire;
Ne what jewelles men in the fire caſte,
Whan that the fire was gret and brente faſte;
Ne how ſom caſt hir ſheld and ſom hir ſpere,
And of hir veſtimentes which they were,
And cuppes full of wine, and milk, and blood,
Into the fire, that brent as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes with a huge route
Three times riden all the fire aboute
Upon the left hond, with a loud ſhouting,
And thries with hir ſperes clatering,
And thries how the ladies gan to crie;
Ne how that led was homeward Emelie;
Ne how Arcite is brent to aſhen cold;
Ne how the liche-wake * was yhold
All thilke night; ne how the Grekes play
The wake-plaies ne kepe I not to ſay;
Who wreſtled beſt naked, with oile enoint,
Ne who that bare him beſt in no disjoint:
I woll not tellen eke how they all gon
Home till Athenes whan the play is don,
But ſhortly to the point now wol I wende,
And maken of my longe Tale an ende.
By proceſſe and by lengthe of certain yeres
All ſtenten is the mourning and the teres
Of Grekes by on general aſſent:
Than ſemeth me ther was a parlement
At Athenes upon certain points and cas;
Amonges the which points yſpoken was
To have with certain contrees alliance,
And have of Thebanes fully obeiſance:
For which this noble Theſeus anon
Let ſenden after gentil Palamon.
Unwiſt of him what was the cauſe and why;
But in his blacke clothes ſorwefully
He came at his commandment on hie;
Tho ſente Theſeus for Emelie.
Whan they were ſet, and huſht was al the place,
And Theſeus abiden hath a ſpace,
Or any word came from his wiſe breſt
His eyen ſet he ther as was his leſt,
And with a ſad viſage he ſiked ſtill,
And after that right thus he ſayd his will.
The firſte Mover of the cauſe above,
Whan he firſte made the fayre chaine of love,
Gret was th' effect, and high was his entent;
Well wiſt he why and what therof he ment;
For with that fayre chaine of love he bond
The fire, the air, the watre, and the lond,
In certain bondes, that they may not flee:
That ſame prince and Mover eke (quod he)

* The cuſtom of watching with dead bodies (*lice*, Sax.) is probably very ancient in this country. It was abuſed, as other wakes and vigils were. See *Du Cange* in v. *Virgiliae*. "In vigiliis circa corpora mortuorum vetantur "choreae et cantilenae, feculares ludi et alii turpes et fa-"tui." *Synod. Wigorn. an.* 1240, c. 5.

Hath ſtabliſht, in this wretched world adoun,
Certain of dayes and duration
To all that are engendred in this place,
Over the which day they ne mow not pace,
Al mow they yet the dayes well abrege.
Ther nedeth non autoritee allege,
For it is preved by experience,
But that me luſt declaren my ſentence.
Than may men by this ordre wel diſcerne
That thilke Mover ſtable is and eterne;
Wel may men knowen, but it be a fool,
That every part deriveth from his hool;
For Nature hath not taken his beginning
Of no partie ne cantel of a thing,
But of a thing that parfit is and ſtable,
Deſcending ſo til it be corrumpable;
And therefore of his wiſe purveyance
He hath ſo wel beſet his ordinance,
That ſpeces of thinges and progreſſions
Shullen enduren by ſucceſſions,
And not eterne, withouten any lie;
This maieſt thou underſtand and ſeen at eye.
Lo the oke, that hath ſo long a noriſhing
Fro the time that it ginneth firſt to ſpring,
And hath ſo long a lif, as ye may ſee,
Yet at the laſte waſted is the tree.
Conſidereth eke how that the harde ſtone
Under our feet, on which we trede and gon,
It waſteth as it lieth by the wey;
The brode river ſometime wexeth drey;
The grete tounes ſee we wane and wende;
Than may ye ſee that all thing hathe an ende.
Of man and woman ſee we wel alſo,
That nedes in on of the termes two,
That is to ſayn, in youthe or elles age,
He mote be ded the king as ſhall a page;
Som in his bed, ſom in the depe ſee,
Som in the large feld, as ye may ſee:
Ther helpeth nought, all goth that ilke wey;
Than may I ſayn that alle thing mote dey.
What maketh this but Jupiter the King,
The which is prince and cauſe of alle thing,
Converting alle unto his propre wille,
From which it is derived, ſoth to telle?
And here-againes no creature on live
Of no degree availleth for to ſtrive.
Than is it wiſdom, as it thinketh me,
To maken vertue of neceſſite,
And take it wel that we may not eſchewe,
And namely that to us all is dewe;
And whoſo grutcheth ought he doth folie,
And rebel is to him that all may gie.
And certainly a man hath moſt honour
To dien in his excellence and flour,
Whan he is ſiker of his goode name;
Than hath he don his frend ne him no ſhame;
And glader ought his frend ben of his deth,
Whan with honour is yolden up his breth,
Than whan his name appalled is for age,
For all foryetten is his vaſſalage:
Than is it beſt as for a worthy fame,
To dein whan a man is beſt of name.
The contrary of all this is wilfulneſſe.
Why grutchen we? why have we hevineſſe,
That good Arcite, of chivalry the flour,
Departed is, with dutee and honour,
Out of this foule priſon of this lif?
Why grutchen here his coſin and his wif
Of his welfare, that loven him ſo wel?
Can he hem thank? nay, God wot, never a del,
That both his ſoule and eke hemſelf offend,
And yet they mow her luſtres not amend.
What may I conclude of this longe ſerie,
But after ſorwe I rede us to be merie,
And thanken Jupiter of all his grace;
And er that we departen from this place,
I rede that we make of ſorwes two
O parfit joye laſting evermo:
And loketh now wher moſt ſorwe is herein,
Ther wol I firſte amenden and begin.
Siſter, (quod he) this is my full aſſent,
With all th' avis here of my parlement,
That gentil Palamon, your owen knight,
That ſerveth you with will, and herte, and might,
And ever hath don ſin you firſt him knew,
That ye ſhall of your grace upon him rew,
And taken him for huſbond and for lord:
Lene me your hand, for this is oure accord.
Let ſee now of your womanly pitee:
He is a kinges brothers ſome pardee;
And though he were a poure bachelere,
Sin he hath ſerved you ſo many a yere,
And had for you ſo gret adverſite,
It moſte ben conſidered, leveth me,
For gentil mercy oweth to paſſen right.
Than ſayd he thus to Palamon the Knight;
I trow ther nedeth litel ſermoning
To maken you aſſenten to this thing.
Cometh ner, and take your lady by the hond.
Betwixen hem was maked anon the bond
That highte Matrimoine or Mariage,
By all the conſeil of the baronage;
And thus with alle bliſſe and melodie
Hath Palamon ywedded Emelie;
And God, that all this wide world hath wrought,
Send him his love that hath it dere ybought.
For now is Palamon in alle wele,
Living in bliſſe, in richeſſe, and in hele,
And Emilie him loveth ſo tendrely,
And he hire ſerveth all ſo gentilly,
That never was ther no word hem betwene
Of jalouſie, ne of non other tene.
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelie,
And God ſave all this fayre compagnie.

THE MILLERES PROLOGUE.

Whan that the Knight had thus his Tale told,
In all the compagnie n'as ther young ne old
That he ne ſaid it was a noble ſtorie,
And worthy to be drawen to memorie,
And namely the gentiles everich on.
Our Hoſte lough and ſwore, So mote I gon
This goth aright; unbokeled is the male;
Let ſee now who ſhall tel another Tale,
For trewely this game is wel begonne:
Now telleth ye ſire Monk, if that ye conne,
Somewhat to quiten with the Knightes Tale.
The Miller, that for-dronken was all pale,
So that unnethes upon his hors he ſat,
He n'old avalen neither hood ne hat,
Ne abiden no man for his curteſie,
But in Pilates vois he gan to crie,
And ſwore by armes, and by blood, and bones,
I can a noble Tale for the nones,
With which I will now quite the Knightes Tale.
Our Hoſte ſaw that he was dronken of ale,
And ſayd, abide, Robin, my leve brother,
Some better man ſhall tell us firſt another;
Abide, and let us werken thriftily.
By Goddes ſoule (quod he) that wol not I,
For I wol ſpeke, or elles go my way.
Our Hoſte anſwered, Tell on a devil way;
Thou art a fool; thy wit is overcome.
Now herkeneth, quod the Miller, all and ſome:
But firſt I make a proteſtatioun
That I am dronke, I know it by my ſoun,
And therefore if that I miſſpeke or ſay
Wite it the ale of Southwerk I you pray;
For I woll tell a legend and a lif
Both of a carpenter and his wif,
How that a clerk has ſet the wrightes cappe.
The Reve anſwerd and ſaide, Stint thy clappe;
Let be thy lewed dronken harlotrie.
It is a ſinne and eke a gret folie
To apeiren any man, or him defame,
And eke to bringen wives in ſwiche a name;
Thou mayſt ynough of other thinges ſain.
This dronken Miller ſpake ful ſone again,
And ſayde, Leve brother Oſewold,
Who hath no wif he is no cokewold;
But I ſay not therefore that thou art on;
Ther ben ful goode wives many on*.
Why art thou angry with my Tale now?
I have a wif parde as wel as thou,
Yet n'olde I for the oxen in my plough
Taken upon me more than ynough
As demen of myſelf that I am on;
I wol beleven wel that I am non.
An huſbond ſhuld not be inquiſitif
Of Goddes privite ne of his wif:
So he may finden Goddes foiſon there
Of the remenant nedeth not to enquere.
What ſhuld I more ſay, but this Millere
He n'olde his wordes for no man forbere,
But told his cherles Tale in his manere,
Me thinketh that I ſhal reherſe it here;
And therefore every gentil wight I pray,
For Goddes love, as deme not that I ſay
Of evil entent, but that I mote reherſe
Hir Tales alle, al be they better or werſe,
Or elles falſen ſom of my matere;
And therefore who ſo liſt it not to here
Turne over the leef, and cheſe another Tale,
For he ſhal find ynow bothe grete and ſmale,
Of ſtorial thing that toucheth gentilleſſe,
And eke moralite and holineſſe.
Blameth not me if that ye cheſe amis;
The Miller is a cherl, ye know well this,
So was the Reve, (and many other mo)
And harlotrie they tolden bothe two.
Aviſeth you now, and put me out of blame;
And eke men ſhuld not make ernęſt of game.

* After this verſe the two following are found in ſo many mſſ. that perhaps they ought to have been inſerted in the text;

And ever a thouſand good ageins on badde,
That knowett thou wel but if thou be madde.

THE MILLERES TALE*.

Whilom ther was dwelling in Oxenforde
A riche gnof, that geſtes helde to borde,
And of his craft he was a carpenter.
With him ther was dwelling a poor ſcoler,
Had lerned art, but all his fantaſie
Was turned for to lerne aſtrologie,
And coude a certain of concluſions
To demen by interrogations,
If that men aſked him in certain houres
Whan that men ſhulde have drought or elles [ſhoures;
Or if men aſked him what ſhulde falle
Of every thing, I may not reken alle.

This clerk was cleped Hendy Nicholas;
Of derne love he coude and of ſolas;
And therto he was ſlie and ful prive,
And like a maiden meke for to ſe.
A chambre had he in that hoſtelrie
Alone, withouten any compagnie,
Ful ſetiſly ydight with herbes ſote,
And he himſelf was ſwete as is the rote,
Of licoris, or any ſetewale.
His almageſte, and bokes gret and ſmale,
His aſtrelabre, longing for his art,
His augrim ſtones †, layen faire apart
On ſhelves couched at his beddes hed,
His preſſe ycovered with a falding red;
And all above ther lay a gay ſautrie,
On which he made on nightes melodie
So ſwetely, that all the chambre rong,
And *Angelus ad Virginem* he ſong;
And after that he ſong the kinges note:
Ful often bleſſed was his mery throte,
And thus this ſwete clerk his time ſpent
After his frendes finding and his rent.

This carpenter had wedded new a wif
Which that he loved more than his lif:
Of eightene yere ſhe was I geſſe of age.
Jalous he was, and held hire narwe in cage,
For ſhe was wild and yonge, and he was old,
And demed himſelf belike a cokewold.
He know not Caton, for his wit was rude,
That bade a man ſhudde wedde his ſimilitude;
Men ſhulden wedden after hir eſtate,
For youthe and elde is often at debate;
But ſithen he was fallen in the ſnare
He moſt endure (as other folk) his care.

Fayre was this yongue wif, and therwithal
As any weſel hire body gent and ſmal.
A ſeint ſhe wered, barred all of ſilk,
A barme-cloth eke as white as morwe milk
Upon hire lendes, ful of many a gore;
White was hire ſmok, and brouded all before
And eke behind on hire colere aboute
Of cole-black ſilk within and eke withoute:
The tapes of hire white volupere
Were of the ſame ſuit of hire colere;
Hire filket brode of ſilk, and ſet full hye;
And ſikerly ſhe had a likerous eye:
Ful ſmal ypulled were hire browes two,
And they were bent, and black as any ſlo:
She was wel more blisful for to ſee
Than is the newe perienete tree,
And ſofter than the wolle is of a wether.

And by hire girdel heng a purſe of lether
Taſſeled with ſilk and perled with latoun.
In all this world to ſeken up and doun
Ther n'is no man ſo wiſe that coude thenche
So gay a popelot or ſwiche a wenche.
Ful brighter was the ſhining of hire hewe
Than in the Tour the noble yforged newe;
But of hire ſong, it was as loud and yerne
As any ſwalow ſitting on a berne.
Thereto ſhe coude ſkip and make a game
As any kid or calf folowing his dame.
Hire mouth was ſwete as braket or the meth,
Or hord of apples laid in hay or heth.
Winſing ſhe was as is a joly colt,
Long as a maſt, and upright as a bolt.
A broche ſhe bare upon hire low colere,
As brode as is the boſſe of a bokelere.
Hire ſhoon were laced on hire legges hie;
She was a primerole, a piggeſnie,
For any lord to liggen in his bedde,
Or yet for any good yemen to wedde.

Now fire, and eft fire, ſo befell the cas,
That on a day this Hendy Nicholas
Fel with this yonge wif to rage and pleye,
While that hire huſbond was at Oſeney,
As clerkes ben ful ſubtil and ful queint,
And prively he caught hire by the queint,
And ſayde, Yw is but if I have my will
For derne love of thee, lemman, I ſpill;
And helde hire faſte by the hanche bones,
And ſayde, Lemman, love me wel at ones,
Or I wol dien, al ſo God me ſave.

And ſhe ſprong as a colt doth in the trave
And with hire hed ſhe writhed faſte away,
And ſayde, I wol not kiſſe thee by my fay.
Why, let be, (quod ſhe) let be, Nicholas,
Or I wol crie out Harow and Alas!
Do way your hondes for your curteſie.

This Nicholas gan mercy for to crie,
And ſpake ſo faire, and profered him ſo faſt,
That ſhe hire love him granted at the laſt,
And ſwore hire oth by Seint Thomas of Kent,
That ſhe wold ben at his commandement
Whan that ſhe may hire leiſer wel eſpie.
Myn huſbond is is ſo ful of jalouſie

* Nicholas, a ſcholar of Oxford, practiſeth with Alliſon, the carpenter's wife of Oſney, to deceive her huſband, but in the end is rewarded accordingly. This is one of thoſe Tales that Lydgate (in his Prologue to The Story of the Siege of Thebes) ſays are of ribaudrie,
To makin laughtir in the company.
So, reader, you know what you are to expect; read or forbear as you think fitting. *Urry.*

† *Augrim* is a corruption of *algoritbm*, the Arabian term for numeration. *Augrim ſtones* therefore were the pebbles or counters which were anciently uſed in numeration.

That but ye waiten wel and be prive
I wot right wel I n'am but ded, quod ſhe;
Ye moſten be ful derne as in this cas.
Nay, th.rof care you not, quod Nicholas:
A clerk ha h litherly beſet his while
But if he coude a carpenter begile.
And thus they were accorded and yſworne
To waite a time, as I h..ve ſaid beforne.
Whan Nicholas had don thus every del,
And thacked hire about the lendes wel,
He kiſſed hire ſwete, and taketh his ſautrie,
And plaieth faſt, and maketh melodie.
Than fell it thus, that to the pariſh cherche
(Of Criſtes owen werkes for to werche)
This good wif went upon a holy day;
Hire forehed ſhone as bright as any day,
So was it waſhen whan ſhe lete hire werk.
Now was ther of that chirche a pariſh clerk
The which that was ycleped Abſolon.
Crulle was his here, and as the gold it ſhon,
And ſtrouted as a fanne large and brode;
Ful ſtreight and even lay his joly ſhode:
His rode was red, his eyen grey as goos,
With Poules windowes corven on his ſhoos:
In hoſen red he went ful fetifly:
Yclad he was ful ſmal and proprely
All in a kirtel of a light waget *;
Ful faire and thicke ben the pointes ſet;
And therupon he had a gay ſurpliſe,
As white as is the bloſme upon the riſe.
A mery childe he was, ſo God me ſave;
Wel coud he leten blod, and clippe and ſhave,
And make a chartre of lond and a quitance:
In twenty manere coud he trip and dance,
(After the ſcole of Oxenforde tho)
And with his legges caſten to and fro;
And playen ſonges on a ſmal ribible;
Therto he ſong ſomtime a loud quinible:
And as wel coud he play on a giterne:
In all the toun n'as brewhous ne taverne
That he ne viſited with his ſolas,
Ther as that any gaillard tapſtere was;
But ſoth to ſay he was ſomdel ſquamous
Of farting, and of ſpeche dangerous.
This Abſolon, that joly was and gay,
Goth with a cenſer on the holy day,
Cenſing the wives of the pariſh faſte,
And many a lovely loke he on hem caſte,
And namely on this carpenteres wif;
To loke on hire him thought a mery lif;
She was ſo propre, and ſwete, and likerous,
I dare wel ſain if ſhe had been a mous
And he a cat, he wolde hire hente anon.
This pariſh clerk, this joly Abſolon,
Hath in his herte ſwiche a love longing,
That of no wif toke he non offering;
For curteſie, he ſayd, he n'olde non.
The moone at night ful clere and brighte ſhon,
And Abſolon his giterne hath ytake,
For paramours he thoughte for to wake;
And forth he goth jolif and amorous,
Til he came to the carpenteres hous,
A litel after the cockes had ycrow,
And dreſſed him up by a ſhot window
That was upon the carpenteres wal.
He ſingeth in his vois gentil and ſmal,
Now, dere Lady—if thy wille be,
I pray you that ye—wol rewe on me;
Ful wel accordant to his giterning.
This carpenter awoke, herd him ſing,
And ſpake unto his wif, and ſaid anon,
What, Aliſon! heres thou not Abſolon,
That chanteth thus under our boures wal?
And ſhe anſwerd hire huſbond therwithal,
Yes, God wot, John, I here him every del.
This paſſeth forth; what wol ye bet than wel?
Fro day to day this joly Abſolon
So loveth hire that him is wo-begon:
He waketh all the night, and all the day
He kembeth his lockes brode, and made him gay;
He woeth hire by menes and brocage,
And ſwore he wolde ben hire owen page:
He ſingeth brokking as a nightingale;
He ſent her pinnes, methe, and ſpiced ale,
And wafres piping hot out of the glede;
And for ſhe was of toun he profered mede;
For ſom folk wol be wonnen for richeſſe,
And ſom for ſtrokes, and ſome with gentilleſſe.
Sometime to ſhew his lightneſſe and maiſtrie
He plaieth Herode on a ſkaffold hie.
But what availeth him as in this cas?
So loveth ſhe this Hendy Nicholas,
That Abſolon may blow the buckes horne;
He ne had for his labour but a ſcorne:
And thus ſhe maketh Abſolon hire ape,
And all his erneſt tourneth to a jape.
Ful ſoth is this proverbe, it is no lie;
Men ſay right thus alway, The neighe ſlie
Maketh of time the fer leef to be lothe:
For though that Abſolon be wood or wrothe,
Becauſe that he fer was from hire ſight,
This neighe Nicholas ſtood in his light.
Now bere thee wel, thou Hendy Nicholas,
For Abſolon may waile and ſing alas.
And ſo befell that on a Saturday
This carpenter was gon to Oſenay,
And Hendy Nicholas and Aliſon
Accorded ben to this concluſion,
That Nicholas ſhal ſhapen him a wile
This ſely jalous huſbond to begile;
And if ſo were the game went aright
She ſhuld ſlepe in his armes alle night,
For this was hire deſire and his alſo.
And right anon, withouten wordes mo,
This Nicholas no lenger wold tarie,
But doth ful ſoft unto his chambre carie
Both mete and drinke for a day or twey.
And to hire huſbond bad her for to ſey,
If that he axed after Nicholas
She ſhulde ſay ſhe n'iſte not wher he was;
Of all the day ſhe ſaw him not with eye;
She trowed he was in ſom maladie,
For for no crie hire maiden coud him calle,
He n'olde anſwer for nothing that might falle.
Thus paſſeth forth all thilke Saturday,
That Nicholas ſtill in his chambre lay,

* Or *watchet*. Skinner explains *watchet* to mean a colour, a whitiſh blue; but in this place it ſeems rather to mean ſome kind of cloth, denominated perhaps from the town of Watchet in Somerſetſhire. Inſtead of *light* ſome mſſ. read *fin*, and mſ. *A. whit*. This laſt epithet would be quite inconſiſtent with Skinner's explanation.

And ete, and ſlept, and dide what him liſt,
Til Sonday that the ſonne gothe to reſt.
This ſely carpenter hath gret mervaile
Of Nicholas, or what thing might him aile,
And ſaid, I am adrad by Seint Thomas
It ſtondeth not aright with Nicholas;
God ſhilde that he died ſodenly;
This world is now ful tikel ſikerly:
I ſaw to-day a corps yborne to cherche
That now on Monday laſt I ſaw him werche.
Go up (quod he unto his knave) anon,
Clepe at his dore, or knocke with a ſton;
Loke how it is, and telle me boldely.
This knave got him up ful ſturdely,
And at the chambre dore while that he ſtood
He cried and knocked as that he were wood;
What? how? what do ye, Maiſter Nicholay?
How may ye ſlepen all the longe day?
But all for nought, he herde not a word.
An hole he fond ful low upon the bord,
Ther as the cat was wont in for to crepe,
And at that hole he loked in ful depe,
And at the laſt he had of him a ſight.
This Nicholas ſat ever gaping upright,
As he had kyked on the newe mone.
Adoun he goth, and telleth his maiſter ſone
In what array he ſaw this ilke man.
This carpenter to bliſſen him began,
And ſaid, Now helpe us Seinte Frideſwide!
A man wote litel what ſhal him betide.
This man is fallen with his aſtronomie
In ſom woodneſſe or in ſom agonie.
I thought ay wel how that it ſhulde be;
Men ſhulde not knowe of Goddes privetee.
Ya, bleſſed be alway a lewed man,
That nought but only his beleve can.
So ferd another clerk with aſtronomie;
He walked in the feldes for to prie
Upon the ſterres, what ther ſhuld befalle,
Til he was in a marlepit yfalle.
He ſaw not that. But yet by Seint Thomas
Me reweth ſore of Hendy Nicholas:
He ſhal be rated of his ſtudying,
If that I may, by Jeſus, heven king.
Get me a ſtaff, that I may underſpore
While that thou, Robin, heveſt of the dore:
He ſhal out of his ſtudying as I geſſe.
And to the chambre dore he gan him dreſſe.
His knave was a ſtrong carl for the nones,
And by the haſpe he haf it of at ones:
Into the flore the dore fell anon.
This Nicholas ſat ay as ſtille as ſton,
And ever he gaped upward into the eire.
This carpenter wond he were in deſpeire,
And hent him by the ſhulders mightily,
And ſhoke him hard, and cried ſpitouſly;
What, Nicholas? what, how man? loke adoun;
Awake, and thinke on Criſtes paſſioun.
I crouche thee from elves and from wightes.
Therwith the nightſpel ſaid he anon rightes
On foure halves of the hous aboute
And on the threſwold of the dore withoute:
Jeſu Criſt and Seint Benedight
Bliſſe this hous from every wicked wight,
Fro the nightes mare, the wite Pater-noſter!
Wher woneſt thou Seint Peters ſuſter?
And at the laſt this Hendy Nicholas
Gan for to ſiken ſore, and ſaid, alas!
Shal all the world be loſt eftſones now?
This carpenter anſwered, What ſaieſt thou?
What? thinke on God, as we do, men that ſwinke.
This Nicholas anſwered, Fetch me a drinke;
And after wol I ſpeke in privetee
Of certain thing that toucheth thee and me:
I wol tell it non other man certain.
This carpenter goth doun and cometh again,
And brought of nighty ale a large quart;
And whan that eche of hem had dronken his part,
This Nicholas his dore faſte ſhette,
And doun the carpenter by him he ſette,
And ſaide, John, min hoſte lefe and dere,
Thou ſhalt upon thy trouthe ſwere me here
That to no wight thou ſhalt my counſeil wrey,
For it is Criſtes counſeil that I ſay,
And if thou tell it man thou art forlore;
For this vengeance thou ſhalt have therfore,
That if thou wreye me thou ſhalt be wood.
Nay, Criſt forbede it for his holy blood,
Quod tho this ſely man: I am no labbe,
Ne though I ſay it I n'am not lefe to gabbe.
Say what thou wolt, I ſhall it never telle
To child ne wif, by him that harwed helle.
Now, John, (quod Nicholas) I wol not lie,
I have yfounde in min aſtrologie,
As I have loked in the moone bright,
That now on Monday next, at quarter night,
Shal fal a rain, and that ſo wild and wood,
That half ſo gret was never Noes flood:
This world (he ſaid) in leſſe than an houre
Shal all be dreint, ſo hidous is the ſhoure:
Thus ſhal mankinde drenche and leſe hir life.
This carpenter anſwerd, Alas my wif!
And ſhal ſhe drenche? alas min Aliſoun!
For ſorwe of this he fell almoſt adoun,
And ſaid, Is ther no remedy in this cas?
Why yes, for God, quod Hendy Nicholas;
If thou wolt werken after lore and rede,
Thou maiſt not werken after thin owen hede;
For thus ſaith Salomon, that was ful trewe,
Werke all by conſeil, and thou ſhalt not rewe.
And if thou werken wolt by good conſeil
I undertake, withouten maſt or ſeyl,
Yet ſhall I ſaven hire, and thee and me.
Haſt thou not herd how ſaved was Noe,
Whan that our Lord had warned him beforne,
That all the world with water ſhuld be lorne?
Yes, (quod this carpenter) ful yore ago.
Haſt thou not herd (quod Nicholas) alſo
The ſorwe of Noe with his felawſhip,
Or that he might get his wif to ſhip?
Him had be lever, I dare wel undertake,
At thilke time, than all his wethers blake,
That ſhe had had a ſhip hire ſelf alone;
And therfore woſt thou what is beſt to done?
This axeth haſt, and of an haſtif thing
Men may not preche and maken tarying.
Anon go get us faſt into this in
A kneding trough or elles a kemelyn

For eche of us; but loke that they ben large,
In which we mowen ſwimme as in a barge;
And have therin vitaille ſuffiſant
But for a day; fie on the remenant;
The water ſhall aſlake and gon away
Abouten prime upon the nexte day.
But Robin may not wete of this thy knave,
Ne eke thy mayden Gille I may not ſave:
Axe not why; for though thou axe me,
I wol not tellen Goddes privetee.
Sufficeth thee, but if thy wittes madde,
To have as gret a grace as Noe hadde.
Thy wif ſhal I wel ſaven out of doute.
Go now thy way, and ſpede thee hereaboute.
But whan thou haſt for hire, and thee, and me,
Ygeten us theſe kneding tubbes thre,
Than ſhalt thou hang hem in the roofe ful hie,
That no man of our purveyance eſpie:
And whan thou haſt don thus as I have ſaid,
And haſt our vitaille faire in hem ylaid,
And eke an axe to ſmite the cord a-two
Whan that the water cometh, that we may go
And breke an hole on high upon the gable
Unto the gardin ward, over the ſtable,
That we may frely paſſen forth our way,
Whan that the grete ſhoure is gon away,
Than ſhal thou ſwim as mery, I undertake,
As doth the white doke after hire drake;
Than wol I clepe, How, Aliſon! how, John!
Be mery, for the flood wol paſſe anon.
And thou wolt ſain, Haile! Maiſter Nicholay,
Good morwe! I ſee thee wel, for it is day.
And than ſhall we be lordes all our lif
Of all the world, as Noe and his wif.
But of o thing I warne thee ful right,
Be wel aviſed on that ilke night,
That we ben entred into ſhippes bord,
That non of us ne ſpeke not o word,
Ne clepe ne crie, but be in his praiere,
For it is Goddes owen heſte dere.
Thy wif and thou moſte hangen fer a-twinne,
For that betwixen you ſhal be no ſinne,
No more in loking than ther ſhall in dede.
This ordinance is ſaid; go, God thee ſpede.
To morwe at night, whan men ben all aſlepe,
Into our kneding tubbes wol we crepe,
And ſitten ther, abiding Goddes grace.
Go now thy way, I have no lenger ſpace
To make of this, no lenger ſermoning:
Men ſain thus, Send the wiſe, and ſay nothing:
Thou art ſo wiſe it nedeth thee nought teche.
Go, ſave our lives, and that I thee beſeche.
This ſely carpenter goth forth his way,
Ful oft he ſaid Alas! and Wala wa!
And to his wif he told his privatee,
And ſhe was ware, and knew it bet than he
What all this queinte caſt was for to ſey;
But natheles ſhe ferde as ſhe wold dey,
And ſaid, Alas! go forth thy way anon;
Helpe us to ſcape, or we be ded eche on:
I am thy trewe veray wedded wif;
Go, dere ſpouſe! and helpe to ſave our lif.
Lo, what a gret thing is affection!
Men may die of imagination,
So depe may impreſſion be take.
This ſely carpenter beginneth quake;
Him thinketh verily that he may ſee
Noes flood comen walwing as the ſee
To drenchen Aliſon, his honey dere:
He wepeth, waileth, maketh ſory chere;
He ſiketh, with ful many a ſory ſwough.
He goth and geteth him a kneding trough,
And after a tubbe and a kemelin,
And prively he ſent hem to his in,
And heng hem in the roof in privetee.
His owen hond than made he ladders three†,
To climben by the renges and the ſtalkes
Unto the tubbes honging in the balkes;
And hem vitailled, kemelin, trough, and tubbe,
With bred and cheſe, and good ale in a jubbe,
Sufficing right ynow as for a day.
But er that he had made all this array
He ſent his knave, and eke his wenche alſo,
Upon his nede to London for to go.
And on the Monday, whan it drew to night,
He ſhette his dore, withouten candel light,
And dreſſed all thing as it ſhulde bee;
And ſhortly up they clomben alle three.
They ſitten ſtille wel a furlong way.
Now, *Pater-noſter*, Clum, ſaid Nicholay,
And Clum, quod John, and Clum, ſaid Aliſon:
This carpenter ſaid his devotion,
And ſtill he ſit, and biddeth his praiere,
Awaiting on the rain, if he it here.
The dede ſlepe, for wery beſineſſe,
Fell on this carpenter, right as I geſſe,
Abouten curfew time, or litel more.
For travaille of his goſt he groneth ſore,
And eft he routeth, for his hed miſlay.
Doun of the ladder ſtalketh Nicholay,
And Aliſon ful ſoft adoun hire ſpedde.
Withouten wordes mo they went to bedde,
Ther as the carpenter was wont to lie;
Ther was the revel and the melodie.
And thus lith Aliſon and Nicholas
In beſineſſe of mirthe and in ſolas,
Til that the bell of *laudes* gan to ring,
And freres in the chancel gon to ſing.
This pariſh clerk, this amorous Abſolon,
That is for love alway ſo wo-begon,
Upon the Monday was at Oſenay
With compagnie, him to diſport and play,
And aſked upon cas a cloiſterer
Ful prively after John the carpenter;
And he drew him apart out of the chirche.
He ſaid, I no't, I ſaw him not here wirche
Sith Saturday; I trow that he be went
For timbre ther our abbot hath him ſent;
For he is wont for timbre for to go,
And dwellen at the Grange a day or two;
Or elles he is at his hous certain:
Wher that he be I cannot ſothly ſain.
This Abſolon ful joly was and light,
And thoughte, now is time to wake al night,

† With his own hand. So Gower, *Conf. Amant.* fol. 76. b.
The craſte Mynerve of wolle fonde,
And made cloth *her owen honde*.

For sikerly I saw him nat stiring
About his dore sin day began to spring.
So mote I thrive I shal at cockes crow
Ful prively go knocke at his window,
That stant full low upon his boures wall:
To Alison wol I now tellen all
My love longing; for yet I shall not misse
That at the leste way I shal hire kisse.
Some maner comfort shal I have parfay,
My mouth hath itched al this longe day;
That is a signe of kissing at the leste:
All night me mette eke I was at a feste:
Therfore I wol go slepe an houre or twey,
And all the night than wol I wake and pley.
Whan that the firste cock hath crowe, anon
Up rist this joly lover Absolon,
And him arayeth gay, at point devise;
But first he cheweth grein and licorise,
To smellen sote or he had spoke with here.
Under his tonge a trewe love he bere,
For therby wend he to ben gracious.
He cometh to the carpenteres hous,
And still he stant under the shot window;
Unto his brest it raught, it was so low;
And soft he cougheth with a semisoun.
What do ye, honycombe, swete Alisoun,
My faire bird, my swete sinamome!
Awaketh, lemman min, and speketh to me.
Ful litel thinken ye upon my wo,
That for your love I swete ther as I go.
No wonder is though that I swelte and swete,
I mourne as doth a lamb after the tete.
Ywis, lemman, I have swiche love longing
That like a turtel trewe is my mourning.
I may not ete no more than a maid.
Go fro the window, jacke fool, she said:
As helpe me God it wol not be, compame.
I love another, or elles I were to blame,
Wel bet than thee by Jesu, Absolon.
Go forth thy way, or I wol cast a ston;
And let me slepe; a twenty divel way.
Alas! (quod Absolon) and wala wa!
That trewe love was ever so yvel besette:
Than kisse me, sin that it may be no bette,
For Jesus love, and for the love of me.
Wilt thou than go thy way therwith? quod she.
Ya certes, lemman, quod this Absolon.
Than make thee redy, (quod she) I come anon.
This Absolon doun set him on his knees,
And saide, I am a lord at all degrees:
For after this I hope ther cometh more;
Lemman, thy grace, and, swete bird! thyn ore.
The window she undoth, and that in haste.
Have don, (quod she) come of, and spede thee faste,
Lest that our neighboures thee espie.
This Absolon gan wipe his mouth ful drie.
Derke was the night as pitch or as the cole,
And at the window she put out hire hole,
And Absolon him felle ne bet ne wers,
But with his mouth he kist hire naked ers
Ful savorly, er he was ware of this.
Abak he sterte, and thought it was amis,
For wel he wist a woman hath no berd.
He felt a thing all rowe, and long yherd,
And saide, Fy, alas! what have I do?
Te he, quod she, and clapt the window to;
And Absolon goth forth a sory pas.
A berd, a berd! said Hendy Nicholas;
By Goddes *corpus* this goth faire and wel.
This sely Absolon herd every del,
And on his lippe he gan for anger bite,
And to himself he said I shal thee quite.
Who rubbeth now, who froteth now his lippes
With dust, with sond, with straw, with cloth, with chippes,
But Absolon? that saith full oft Alas!
My soule betake I unto Sathanás
But me were lever than all this toun (quod he)
Of this despit awroken for to be.
Alas! alas! that I ne had yblent.
His hote love is cold and all yqueint;
For fro that time that he had kist hire ers
Of paramours ne raught he not a kers,
For he was heled of his maladie;
Ful often paramours he gan defie,
And wepe as doth a child that is ybete.
A soste pas he went him over the strete
Until a smith man callen Dan Gerveis,
That in his forge smithed plow-harneis;
He sharpeth share and cultre besily.
This Absolon knocketh all esily,
And said, Undo, Gerveis, and that anon.
What, who art thou? It am I Absolon.
What, Absolon? what, Christes swete tre,
Why rise ye so rath? ey *benedicite!*
What eileth you? some gay girle, God it wote,
Hath brought you thus upon the viretote:
By Seint Neote ye wote wel what I mene.
This Absolon ne raughte not a bene
Of all his play; no word again he yaf:
He hadde more tawe on his distaf
Than Gerveis knew, and saide, Frend so dere,
That hote culter in the cheminee here
As lene it me, I have therwith to don;
I wol it bring again to thee ful sone.
Gerveis answered, Certes were it gold,
Or in a poke nobles all untold,
Thou shuldest it have, as I am trewe smith.
Ey, Cristes foot, what wol ye don therwith?
Therof, quod Absolon, be as be may,
I shal wel tellen thee another day;
And caught the culter by the colde stele.
Ful soft out at the dore he gan to stele,
And went unto the carpenteres wall;
He coughed first, and knocked therwithall
Upon the window, right as he did er.
This Alison answered, Who is ther
That knocketh so? I warrant him a thefe.
Nay, nay, (quod he) God wot, my swete lefe,
I am thin Absolon, thy dereling.
Of gold (quod he) I have thee brought a ring;
My mother yave it me, so God me save,
Ful fine it is, and therto wel ygrave;
This wol I yeven thee if thou me kisse.
This Nicholas was risen for to pisse,
And thought he wolde amenden all the jape,
He shulde kisse his ers er that he scape;
And up the window did he hastily,
And out his ers he putteth privily

Over the buttok, to the hanche bon;
And therwith ſpake this clerk, this Abſolon,
Speke ſwete bird, I n'ot not wher thou art.
This Nicholas anon let fleen a fart
As gret as it had been a thonder dint,
That with the ſtroke he was wel nie yblint;
And he was redy with his yren hote,
And Nicholas amid the ers he ſmote.
Off goth the ſkinne an hondbrede al aboute:
The hote culter brenned ſo his toute,
That for the ſmert he wened for to die;
As he were wood for wo he gan to crie
Helpe, water, water! help for Goddes herte!
This carpenter out of his ſlumber ſterte,
And herd on crie Water as he were wood,
And thought, alas! now cometh Noes flood.
He ſet him up withouten wordes mo,
And with his axe he ſmote the cord atwo,
And doun goth all; he fond neyther to ſelle
Ne breed ne ale til he came to the ſelle,
Upon the flore, and ther aſwoune he lay.
Up ſterten Aliſon and Nicholay,
And crieden, Out and harrow! in the ſtrete.
The neigheboures bothe ſmale and grete
In rannen for to gauren on this man,
That yet aſwonne lay bothe pale and wan,
For with the fall he broſten hath his arm.
But ſtonden he muſt unto his owen harm,
For whan he ſpake he was anon bore doun
With Hendy Nicholas and Aliſoun.
They tolden every man that he was wood,
He was agaſte ſo of Noes flood
Thurgh fantaſie, that of his vanitee
He had ybought him kneding tubbes three,
And had hem honged in the roof above,
And that he praied hem for Goddes love
To ſitten in the roof *par compagnie*.
The folk gan laughen at his fantaſie.
Into the roof they kyken and they gape,
And turned all his harm into a jape.
For what ſo that this carpenter anſwerd
It was for nought, no man his reſon herd.
With othes gret he was ſo ſworne adoun
That he was holden wood in all the toun,
For everich clerk anon right held with other;
They ſaid the man was wood, my leve brother;
And every wight gan laughen at this ſtrif.
Thus ſwived was the carpenteres wif
For all his keping and his jalouſie,
And Abſolon hath kiſt hire nether eye,
And Nicholas is ſcalded in the toute.
This Tale is don, and God ſave all the route.

THE REVES PROLOGUE.

Whan folk han laughed at this nice cas
Of Abſolon and Hendy Nicholas,
Diverſe folk diverſely they ſaide,
But for the more part they lought and plaide;
Ne at this Tale I ſaw no man greve
But it were only Oſewold the Reve:
Becauſe he was of carpenteres craft
A litel ire is in his herte ylaft;
He gan to grutch and blamen it a lite.
So the ik, quod he, ful wel coude I him quite
With blering of a proude milleres eye,
If that me liſt to ſpeke of ribaudrie.
But ik am olde; me liſt not play for age;
Gras time is don, my foddre is now forage:
This white top writeth myne old yeres;
Min herte is alſo moulded as min heres;
But if I fare as doth an open ers,
That ilke fruit is ever lenger the wers
Til it be roten in mullok or in ſtre.
We olde men, I drede, ſo faren we;
Til we be roten can we not be ripe;
We hoppe alway while that the world wol pipe;
For in our will ther ſtiketh ever a nayl,
To have an hore hed and a grene tayl,
As hath a leke; for though our might be gon
Our will deſireth folly ever in on;
For whan we may not don than wol we ſpeken,
Yet in our aſhen cold is fire yreken.
Four gledes han we which I ſhal deviſe,
Avannting, lying, anger, and covetiſe;
Theſe foure ſparkes longen unto elde;
Our olde limes mow wel ben unwelde,
But will ne ſhall not faillen that is ſothe:
And yet have I alway a coltes tothe,
As many a yere as it paſſed henne
Sin that my tappe of lif began to renne;
For ſikerly whan I was borne anon
Deth drow the tappe of lif and let it gon;
And ever ſith hath ſo the tappe yronne,
Til that almoſt all empty is the tonne;
The ſtreme of lif now droppeth on the chimbe*.
The ſely tonge may wel ringe and chimbe
Of wretchedneſſe that paſſed is ful yore:
With olde folk ſave dotage is no more.
Whan that our Hoſte had herd this ſermoning,
He gan to ſpeke as lordly as a king,
And ſayde, What amounteth all this wit?
What, ſhall we ſpeke all day of holy writ?
The devil made a Reve for to preche,
Or of a ſouter a ſhipman or a leche.
Say forth thy Tale, and tary not the time;
Lo Depeford, and it is half way prime:
Lo Grenewich, ther many a ſhrew is inne:
It were al time thy Tale to beginne.
Now, ſires, quod this Oſewold the Reve,
I pray you alle that ye not you greve
Though I anſwere, and ſomdel ſet his howve,
For leful is with force force off to ſhowve.
This dronken Miller hath ytold us here
How that begiled was a carpentere,
Paraventure in ſcorne, for I am on;
And by your leve I ſhal him quite anon:
Right in his cherles termes wol I ſpeke;
I pray to God his necke mote to breke.
He can wel in min eye ſeen a ſtalk,
But in his owen he cannot ſeen a balk.

* *Kime*, Teut. means the prominency of the ſtaves beyond the head of the barrel. The imagery is very exact and beautiful.

THE REVES TALE*.

At Trompington, not fer fro Cantebrigge,
Ther goth a brook, and over that a brigge,
Upon the whiche brook ther ſtont a melle;
And this is veray ſothe that I you telle.
A miller was ther dwelling many a day,
As any peacock he was proude and gay:
Pipen he coude, and fiſhe, and nettes bete,
And turnen cuppes, and wraſtlen wel and ſhete.
Ay by his belt he bare a long pavade,
And of a ſwerd ful trenchant was the blade:
A joly popper bare he in his pouche.
Ther n'as no man for peril dorſt him touche.
A Sheffeld thwitel bare he in his hoſe:
Round was his face, and camuſe was his noſe:
As pilled as an ape was his ſkull:
He was a market-beter at the full.
Ther dorſte no wight hond upon him legge,
That he ne ſwore he ſhuld anon abegge.
A theſe he was forſoth of corne and mele,
And that a ſlie, and uſant for to ſtele:
His name was hoten Deinous Simekin †.
A wif he hadde comen of noble kin:
The perſon of the toun hire father was:
With hire he yaf ful many a panne of bras
For that Simkin ſhuld in his blood allie:
She was yfoſtered in a nonnerie;
For Simkin wolde no wif, as he ſayde,
But ſhe were wel ynouriſhed and a mayde,
To ſaven his eſtat of yemanrie:
And ſhe was proud and pert as is a pie.
A ſul faire ſight was it apon hem two.
On holy dayes beforne hire wold he go
With his tipet ybounde about his hed,
And ſhe came after in a gite of red,
And Simkin hadde hoſen of the ſame.
Ther dorſte no wight clepen her but Dame:
Was non ſo hardy, that went by the way,
That with hire dorſte rage or ones play,
But if he wolde be ſlain of Simikin
With pavade, or with knif or bodekin;
(For jalous folk ben perilous evermo,
Algate they wold hir wives wenden ſo.)
And eke, for ſhe was fomdel ſmoterlich,
She was as digne as water in a dich,
And al ſo ful of hoker and of biſmare,
Hire thoughte that a ladie ſhuld hire ſpare,
What for hire kinrede and hire nortelrie
That ſhe had lerned in the nonnerie.
A doughter hadden they betwix hem two
Of twenty yere, withouten any mo,
Saving a child that was of half yere age;
In cradle it lay, and was a propre page.
This wenche thicke-and wel ygrowen was,
With camuſe noſe and eyen grey as glas;
With buttokes brode, and breſtes round and hie,
But right faire was hir here, I wol not lie.
The perſon of the toun, for ſhe was faire,
In purpos was to maken hire his haire
Both of his catel and of his meſuage,
And ſtrange he made it of hire mariage.
His purpos was for to beſtow hire hie
Into ſome worthy blood of anceſtrie,
For holy chirches good mote ben deſpended
On holy chirches blood that is deſcended;
Therfore he wolde his holy blood honoure
Though that he holy chirche ſhuld devoure.
Gret ſoken hath this miller out of doute
With whete and malt of all the land aboute,
And namely ther was a gret college
Men clep the Soler hall at Cantebrege,
Ther was hir whete and eke hir malte yground.
And on a day it happed in a ſtound
Sike lay the manciple on a maladie,
Men wenden wiſly that he ſhulde die;
For which this miller ſtale both mele and corn
An hundred times more than beforn,
For therbeforn he ſtale but curteiſly,
But now he was a theſe outrageouſly,
For which the wardein chidde and made fare,
But therof ſet the miller not a tare;
He craked boſt, and ſwore it n'as not ſo,
Than were ther yonge poure ſcolores two
That dwelten in the halle of which I ſay;
Teſtif they were, and luſty for to play,

* Deuyſe Simkin, the miller of Trompington, deceiveth two clarkes of Soller's hall in Cambridge in ſtealing their corn, but they ſo manage their matters that they revenge the wrong to the full. This Tale is imitated from Boccace, Novel the 6th, Day the 9th.---This you may paſs over if you pleaſe. *Urry.*

† His name was Simon, of which Simekin is the diminutive, and from his diſdainful inſolent manners he had acquired the ſurname of *Deinous*, juſt as Nicholas, in the former tale, was cleped *Hendy* from the very oppoſite behaviour. A great number of our ſurnames have been derived from qualities of the mind, and it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that at the beginning they were merely perſonal, like what we call nicknames. It is probable that the uſe of hereditary ſurnames was not even in Chaucer's time fully eſtabliſhed among the lower claſſes of people.

And only for hir mirth and revelrie
Upon the wardein befily they crie
To yeve hem leve but a little ſtound
To gon to mille and ſeen hir corn yground;
And hardily they dorſten lay hir necke
The miller ſhuld not ſtele hem half a pecke
Of corn by ſleighte, ne by force him reve.
And at the laſt the wardein yave hem leve.
John highte that on, and Alein highte that other;
Of a toun were they born that highte Strother,
Fer in the north, I cannot tellen where.
This Alein maketh redy all his gere,
And on a hors the ſak he caſt anon:
Forth goth Alein the cleſk, and alſo John,
With good ſwerd and with bokeler by hir ſide.
John knew the way, him neded not no guide,
And at the mille the ſak adoun he laith.
Alein ſpake firſt; All haile, Simond, in faith,
How fares thy faire daughter and thy wif?
Alein, welcome (quod Simkin), by my lif,
And John alſo. How now, what do ye here?
By God, Simond (quod John), nede has no pere;
Him behoves ſerve himſelf that has na ſwain,
Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes ſain.
Our manciple I hope he wol be ded,
Swa werkes ay the wanges in his hed;
And therfore is I come, and eke Alein,
To grind our corn and cary it hame agein;
I pray you ſpede us hennen that ye may.
It ſhal be don (quod Simkin) by my fay.
What wol ye don while that it is in hand?
By God, right by the hopper wol I ſtand,
(Quod John) and ſeen how that the corn gas in;
Yet ſaw I never by my fader kin
How that the hopper wagges til and fra.
Alein anſwered, John, and wolt thou ſwa?
Than wol I be benethe by my croun,
And ſee how that the mele falles adoun
In til the trogh; that ſhal be my diſport;
For, John, in faith I may ben of your ſort:
I is as ill a miller as is ye.
This miller ſmiled at hir nicetee,
And thought all this n'is don but for a wile.
They wenen that no man may hem begile,
But by my thrift yet ſhal I blere hir eie
For all the ſleighte in hir philoſophie.
The more queinte knakkes that they make,
The more wol I ſtele whan that I take.
In ſtede of flour yet wol I yeve hem bren.
The greteſt clerkes ben not the wiſeſt men,
As whilom to the wolf thus ſpake the mare:
Of all hir art ne count I not a tare.
Out at the dore he goth ful prively
Whan that he ſaw his time ſoftely.
He loketh up and doun, til he hath found
The clerkes hors ther as he ſtood ybound
Behind the mille under a leveſell,
And to the hors he goth him faire and well,
And ſtripeth of the bridel right anon.
And whan the hors was laus he gan to gon
Toward the fen ther wilde mares renne,
And forth with wehee thurgh thick and thinne.
This miller goth again, no word he ſaid,
But doth his note, and with theſe clerkes plaid,
Till that hir corn was faire and wel yground.
And whan the mele is ſacked and ybound,
This John goth out and fint his hors away,
And gan to crie Harow and wala wa!
Our hors is loſt: Alein, for Goddes banes
Step on thy feet; come of, man, al at anes:
Alas! our wardein has his palfrey lorn.
This Alein al forgat both mele and corn;
Al was out of his mind his huſbandrie:
What, whilke way is he gon? he gan to crie.
The wif came leping inward at a renne;
She ſayd, Alas! youre hors goth to the fenne
With wilde mares as faſt as he may go.
Unthank come on his hand that bond him ſo,
And he that better ſhuld have knit the rein.
Alas! (quod John) Alein, for Criſtes pein
Lay doun thy ſwerd, and I ſhal min alſwa;
I is ful wight, God wate, as is a ra.
By Goddes ſaule he ſhall not ſcape us bathe.
Why ne had thou put the capel in the lathe?
Ill haile, Alein, by God thou is a fonne.
Theſe ſely clerkes han ful faſt yronne
Toward the fen, bothe Alein and eke John;
And whan the miller ſaw that they were gon
He half a buſhel of hir flour hath take,
And bad his wif go knede it in a cake.
He ſayd, I trow the clerkes were aferde:
Yet can a miller make a clerkes berde
For all his art. Ye, let hem gon hir way.
Lo wher they gon. Ye, let the children play:
They get him not ſo lightly by my croun.
Theſe ſely clerkes rennen up and doun
With Kepe, kepe; Stand, ſtand; joſſa, warderere.
Ga whiſtle thou, and I ſhal kepe him here.
But ſhortly, till that it was veray night
They coude not, though they did all hir might,
Hir capel catch, he ran alway ſo faſt,
Til in a diche they caught him at the laſt.
Wery and wet, as beſtes in the rain,
Cometh ſely John, and with him cometh Alein.
Alas (quod John) the day that I was borne!
Now are we driven til hething and til ſcorne.
Our corn is ſtolne, men wol us founes calle,
Both the wardein and eke our ſelawes alle,
And namely the miller, wala wa!
Thus plaineth John as he goth by the way
Toward the mille, and Bayard in his hond.
The miller ſitting by the fire he fond,
For it was night, and forther might they nought,
But for the love of God they him beſought
Of herberwe and of eſe, as for hir peny.
The miller ſaide agen, If ther be any,
Swiche as it is yet ſhall ye have your part.
Myn houſe is ſtreit, but ye have lerned art;
Ye can by arguments maken a place
A mile brode of twenty foot of ſpace.
Let ſee now if this place may ſuffice,
Or make it roume with ſpeche, as is your giſe.
Now, Simond (ſaid this John), by Seint Cuthberd
Ay is thou mery, and that is faire anſwerd.
I have herd ſay man ſal take of twa thinges,
Slike as he findes, or ſlike as he bringes.
But ſpecially I pray thee, hoſte dere,
Gar us have meté and drinke, and make us chere,

And we ſal paien trewely at the full:
With empty hand men may na haukes tull.
Lo here our ſilver redy for to ſpend.
This miller to the toun his doughter ſend
For ale and bred, and roſted hem a goos,
And bond hir hors he ſhuld no more go loos,
And in his owen chambre hem made a bedde,
With ſhetes and with chalons faire yſpredde,
Nat from his owen bed ten foot or twelve:
His doughter had a bed all by hire ſelve,
Right in the ſame chambre by and by:
It mighte be no bet, and cauſe why,
Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place.
They ſoupen, and they ſpeken of ſolace,
And drinken ever ſtrong ale at the beſt.
Abouten midnight wente they to reſt.
Wel hath this miller vernifhed his hed,
Ful pale he was, for-dronken, and nought red.
He yoxeth, and he ſpeketh thurgh the noſe,
As he were on the quakke or on the poſe.
To bed he goth, and with him goth his wif;
As any jay ſhe light was and jolif;
So was hire joly whiſtle wel ywette.
The cradel at hire beddes feet was ſette
To rocken, and to yeve the child to ſouke.
And whan that dronken was all in the crouke
To bedde went the doughter right anon,
To bedde goth Alein and alſo John.
Ther n'as no more; nedeth hem no dwale.
This miller hath ſo wiſly bibbed ale,
That as an hors he ſporteth in his ſlepe,
Ne of his tail behind he toke no kepe.
His wif bare him a burdon a ful ſtrong,
Men might hir routing heren a furlong.
The wenche routeth eke *par compagnie*.
Alein the clerk, that herd this melodie,
He poketh John, and ſayde, Slepeſt thou?
Herdeſt thou ever ſlike a ſong er now?
Lo whilke a complin is ymell hem alle;
A wilde fire upon hir bodies falle,
Wha herkned ever ſlike a ferly thing?
Ye, they ſhall have the flour of yvel ending.
This lange night ther tides me no reſte;
But yet na force, all ſhal be for the beſte.
For, John (ſayd he), as ever mote I thrive,
If that I may yon wenche wol I ſwive.
Som eſement has lawe yſhapen us;
For, John, ther is a lawe that ſaieth thus,
That if a man in o point be agreved
That in another ſhe ſhal be releved.
Our corn is ſtolne, ſothly it is na nay,
And we han had an yvel fit to-day;
And ſin I ſhal have nan amendement
Again my loſſe I wol have an eſement:
By Goddes ſaule it ſhal nan other be.
This John anſwered, Alein, aviſe thee;
The miller is a perilous man, he ſayde,
And if that he out of his ſlepe abraide,
He mighte don us bathe a vilanie.
Alein anſwered, I count him nat a flie.
And up he riſt, and by the wenche he crept.
This wenche lay upright, and faſte ſlept,
Til he ſo nigh was, er ſhe might eſpie,
That it had ben to late for to crie:
And ſhortly for to ſay, they were at on.
Now play Alein, for I wol ſpeke of John.
This John lith ſtill a furlong way or two,
And to himſelf he maketh routh and wo.
Alas! (quod he) this is a wicked jape;
Now may I ſay that I is but an ape.
Yet has my felaw ſomwhat for his harme;
He has the millers doughter in his arme:
He auntred him, and hath his nedes ſpedde,
And I lie as a draf ſak in my bedde;
And whan this jape is tald another day
I ſhal be halden a daffe or a cokenay:
I wol ariſe and auntre it by my fay:
Unhardy is unſely, thus men ſay.
And up he roſe, and ſoftely he went
Unto the cradel, and in his hand it hent,
And bare it ſoft unto his beddes fete.
Sone after this the wif hire routing lete,
And gan awake, and went hire out to piſſe,
And came again, and gan the cradel miſſe,
And groped here and ther, but ſhe fond non.
Alas (quod ſhe)! I had almoſt miſgon;
I had almoſt gon to the clerkes bedde:
Ey *benedicite*! than had I foule yſpedde.
And forth ſhe goth til ſhe the cradel fond.
She gropeth alway forther with hire hond,
And fond the bed, and thoughte nat but good,
Becauſe that the cradel by it ſtood,
And n'iſte wher ſhe was, for it was derk,
But faire and wel ſhe crept in by the clerk,
And lith ful ſtill, and wold han caught a ſlepe.
Within a while this John the clerk up lepe,
And on this goode wif he laieth on ſore;
So mery a fit ne had ſhe nat ful yore:
He priketh hard and depe as he were mad.
This joly lif han theſe two clerkes lad
Til that the thridde cok began to ſing.
Alein wex wery in the morwening,
For he had ſwonken all the longe night,
And ſayd, Farewel, Malkin, my ſwete wight:
The day is come, I may no longer bide,
But evermo wher ſo I go or ride
I is thin owen clerk, ſo have I hele.
Now, dere lemman, quod ſhe, go, farewele;
But or thou go, o thing I wol thee tell.
Whan that thou wendeſt homeward by the mell,
Right at the entree of the dore behind
Thou ſhalt a cake of half a buſhel find
That was ymaked of thin owen mele,
Which that I halpe my fader for to ſtele:
And, goode lemman, God thee ſave and kepe.
And with that word ſhe gan almoſt to wepe.
Alein upriſt, and thought er that it daw,
I wol go crepen in by my felaw;
And fond the cradel at his hand anon.
By God, thought he, all wrang I have miſgon:
My hed is tottie of my ſwink to night,
That maketh me that I go nat aright.
I wot wel by the cradel I have miſgo;
Here lith the miller and his wif alſo.
And forth he goth a twenty divel way
Unto the bed, ther as the miller lay.
He wend have cropen by his felaw John,
And by the miller in he crept anon,

And caught him by the nekke, and gan him ſhake,
And ſayd, Thou John, thou ſwineſhed, awake
For Criſtes ſaule, and here a noble game;
For by that lord that called is Seint Jame,
As I have thries as in this ſhort night
Swived the millers doughter bolt upright
While thou haſt as a coward ben agaſt.
Ye, falſe harlot, quod the miller, haſt?
A, falſe traitour, falſe clerk (quod he),
Thou ſhalt be ded by Goddes dignitee,
Who dorſte be ſo bold to diſparage
My doughter, that is come of ſwiche linage.
And by the throte-bolle he caught Alein,
And he him hent deſpitouſly again,
And on the noſe he ſmote him with his fiſt;
Doun ran the blody ſtreme upon his breſt:
And in the flore with noſe and mouth to-broke
They walwe, as don two pigges in a poke.
And up they gon, and doun again anon,
Til that the miller ſporned at a ſton,
And doun he fell backward upon his wif,
That wiſte nothing of this nice ſtrif;
For ſhe was fall aſlepe a litel wight
With John the clerk, that waked had all night,
And with the fall out of hire ſlepe ſhe braide.
Helpe, holy croſs of Bromeholme! (ſhe ſayde)
In manus tuas, Lord, to thee I call.
Awake, Simond, the fend is on me fall;
Myn herte is broken; helpe; I n'am but ded;
Ther lith on up my wombe and up myn hed:
Helpe, Simkin, for the falſe clerkes fight.
This John ſtert up as faſt as ever he might,
And graſpeth by the walles to and fro
To find a ſtaf, and ſhe ſtert up alſo,
And knew the eſtres bet than did this John,
And by the wall ſhe toke a ſtaf anon,
And ſaw a litel ſhemering of a light,
For at an hole in ſhone the mone bright,
And by that light ſhe ſaw hem bothe two,
But ſikerly ſhe n'iſte who was who,
But as ſhe ſaw a white thing in hire eye;
And whan ſhe gan this white thing eſpie
She wend the clerk had wered a volupere,
And with the ſtaf ſhe drow ay nere and nere,
And wend han hit this Alein atte full,
And ſmote the miller on the pilled ſkull,
That doun he goth, and cried, Harrow! I die.
Thiſe clerkes bete him wel, and let him lie,
And greithen hem, and take hir hors anon,
And eke hir mele, and on hir way they gon;
And at the mille dore eke they toke hir cake
Of half a buſhel flour ful wel ybake.
Thus is the proude miller wel ybette,
And hath yloſt the grinding of the whete,
And paid for the ſouper every del
Of Alein and of John that bete him wel;
His wif is ſwived and his doughter als;
Lo, ſwiche it is a miller to be fals:
And therfore this proverb is ſayd ful ſoth,
Him thar not winnen wel that evil doth;
A gilour ſhal himſelf begiled be;
And God, that ſiteth hie in mageſtee,
Save all this compagnie gret and ſmale.
Thus have I quit the miller in my Tale.

THE COKES PROLOGUE.

THE Coke of London, while the Reve ſpake,
For joye (him thought) he clawed him on the bak:
A ha (quod he) for Criſtes paſſion,
This miller had a ſharpe concluſion
Upon this argument of herbergage.
Wel ſayde Salomon in his langage
Ne bring not every man into thin hous,
For herberwing by night is perilous.
Wel ought a man aviſed for to be
Whom that he brought into his privetee.
I pray to God ſo yeve me ſorwe and care
If ever, ſithen I highte Hodge of Ware,
Herd I a miller bet yſette a-werk;
He had a jape of malice in the derk.
But God forbede that we ſtinten here,
And therfore if ye vouchen ſauf to here
A Tale of me that am a poure man,
I wol you tell as wel as ever I can
A litel jape that fell in our citee.
Our Hoſte anſwerd and ſayde, I grant it thee:
Now tell on, Roger, and loke that it be good,
For many a paſtee haſt thou letten blood,
And many a Jacke of Dover haſt thou ſold
That hath been twies hot and twies cold:
Of many a pilgrim haſt thou Criſtes curſe,
For of thy perſelee yet fare they the werſe,
That they han eten in thy ſtoble goos,
For in thy ſhop goth many a flie loos.
Now tell on, gentil Roger by thy name,
But yet I pray thee be not wroth for game;
A man may ſay ful ſoth in game and play.
Thou ſayſt ful ſoth, quod Roger, by my fay;
But ſoth play *quade ſpel*, as the Fleming ſaith,
And therfore, Herry Bailly, by thy faith
Be thou not wroth, or we departen here,
Though that my Tale be of an hoſtelere:
But natheles, I wol not telle it yet,
But er we part ywis thou ſhalt be quit.
And therwithal he lough and made chere
And ſayd his Tale, as ye ſhal after here.

THE COKES TALE*.

A PRENTIS whilom dwelt in our citee,
And of a craft of vitaillers was he:
Gaillard he was as goldfinch in the ſhawe,
Bronne as a bery, a propre ſhort felawe,
With lokkes blake kembed ful fetiſly:
Dancen he coude ſo wel and jolily,
That he was cleped Perkin Revelour:
He was as ful of love and paramour
As is the hive ful of honey ſwete;
Wel was the wenche with him mighte mete.

* The deſcription of an unthrifty prentice given to dice, women, and wine, waſting thereby his maſter's goods, and purchaſing to himſelf Newgate. The moſt part of this Tale is loſt, or never finiſhed by the Author.

At every bridale would he ſing and hoppe;
He loved bet the taverne than the ſhoppe;
For whan ther any riding was in Chepe
Out of the ſhoppe thider wold he lepe,
And til that he had all the ſight yſein,
And danced wel, he wold not come agein;
And gadred him a meinie of his ſort
To hoppe and ſing, and maken ſwiche diſport;
And ther they ſetten ſteven for to mete
To plain at the dice in ſwiche a ſtrete;
For in the Toun ne was ther no prentis
That fairer coude caſte a pair of dis
Than Perkin coude, and thereto he was fre
Of his diſpence, in place of privetee;

That fond his maiſter wel in his chaffere,
For often time he fond his box ful bare.
For ſothly a prentis, a revelour,
That haunteth dis, riot and paramour,
His maiſter ſhal it in his ſhoppe abie,
Al have he no part of the minſtralcie;
For theft and riot they ben convertible,
Al can they play on giterne or ribible.
Revel and trouth, as in a low degree,
They ben ful wroth all day, as men may ſee.
This joly prentis with his maiſter abode,
Til he was neigh out of his prentiſhode,
Al were he ſnibbed bothe erly and late,
And ſomtime lad with revel to Newgate:
But at the laſt his maiſter him bethought,
Upon a day whan he his paper ſought,
Of a proverbe that ſaith this ſame word,
Wel bet is roten appel out of hord
Than that it rote alle the remenant:
So fareth it by a riotous ſervant;
It is wel laſſe harm to let him pace
Than he ſhende all the ſervants in the place;
Therfore his maiſter yaf him a quittance,
And bad him go, with ſorwe and with meſchance.
And thus this joly prentis had his leve:
Now let him riot all the night or leve.
And for ther n'is no theſe without a louke
That helpeth him to waſten and to ſouke
Of that he briben can or borwe may,
Anon he ſent his bed and his array
Unto a compere of his owen ſort
That loved dis, and riot, and diſport,
And had a wif that held for countenance
A ſhoppe, and ſwived for hire ſuſtenance.

THE MAN OF LAWES PROLOGUE.

Our Hoſte ſaw wel that the brighte ſonne
The ark of his artificial day had ronne
The fourthe part and half an houre and more;
And though he were not depe expert in lore,
He wiſte it was the eighte-and-twenty day
Of April, that is meſſager to May,
And ſaw wel that the ſhadow of every tree
Was as in lengthe of the ſame quantitee
That was the body erect that cauſed it,
And therfore by the ſhadow he toke his wit
That Phebus, which that ſhone ſo clere and bright,
Degrees was five-and-forty clombe on hight;
And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten of the clok he gan conclude,
And ſodenly he plight his hors aboute.
Lordings, quod he, I warne you all this route
The fourthe partie of this day is gon:
Now for the love of God and of Seint John
Leſeth no time, as ferforth as ye may.
Lordings, the time it waſteth night and day,
And ſteleth from us, what prively ſleping,
And what thurgh negligence in our waking,
As doth the ſtreme, that turneth never again,
Deſcending fro the montagne into a plain.
Wel can Senek and many a philoſophre
Bewailen time more than gold in coffre;
For loſſe of catel may recovered be,
But loſſe of time ſhendeth us, quod he.
It wol not come again withouten drede,
No more than wol Malkins maidenhede
When ſhe hath loſt it in hire wantonneſſe:
Let us not moulen thus in idleneſſe.
Sire Man of Lawe, quod he, ſo have ye blis,
Tel us a Tale anon, as forword is.
Ye ben ſubmitted thurgh your free aſſent
To ſtonde in this cas at my jugement.
Acquitteth you now, and holdeth your beheſt;
Than have ye don your devoir at the leſt.
Hoſte, quod he, *de par dieux jeo aſſente*,
To breken forword is not min entente.
Beheſt is dette, and I wold hold it fayn
All my beheſt, I can no better ſayn.
For ſwiche lawe as man yeveth another wight
He ſhuld himſelven uſen it by right.
Thus wol our text; but natheles certain
I can right now no thrifty Tale fain,
But Chaucer (though he can but lewdely
On metres and on riming craftily)
Hath ſayd hem in ſwiche Engliſh as he can
Of olde time, as knoweth many a man;
And if he have not ſayd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath ſayd hem in another:
For he hath told of lovers up and doun
Mo than Ovide made of mentioun
In his *Epiſtolis*, that ben ful olde.
What ſhuld I tellen hem ſin they ben tolde?
In youthe he made of Ceyes and Alcyon,
And ſithen hath he ſpoke of everich on
Thiſe noble wives, and thiſe lovers eke,
Who ſo that wol his large volume ſeke
Cleped The Seintes Legende of Cupide:
Ther may he ſe the large woundes wide
Of Lucrece, and of Babylon Thiſbe;
The ſwerd of Dido for the falſe Enee;
The tree of Phillis for hire Demophon;
The plaint of Deianire and Hermion,
Of Adriane and Yſiphilee;
The barreine ile ſtonding in the ſee;
The dreint Leandre for his fayre Hero;
The teres of Heleine, and eke the wo
Of Briſeide and of Ladomia;
The crueltee of thee, Queene Medea,
Thy litel children hanging by the hals
For thy Jaſon, that was of love ſo fals:
O Hipermeſtra, Penelope, Alceſte!
Your wifhood he commendeth with the beſte.
But certainly no word ne writeth he
Of thilke wicke enſample of Canace,
That loved hire owen brother ſinfully;
(Of all ſwiche curſed ſtories I ſay Fy)
Or elles of Tyrius Appolonious,
How that the curſed king Antiochus
Berafte his doughter of hire maidenhede,
That is ſo horrible a tale for to rede,
Whan he hire threw upon the pavement.
And therfore he of ful aviſement
N'old never write in non of his ſermons
Of ſwiche unkinde abhominations:
Ne I wol non rehcrſe, if that I may,
But of my Tale how ſhal I don this day?
Me were loth to be likened douteles
To Muſes that men clepe Pierides,
(*Metamorphoſeos* wrote what I mene)
But natheles I recche not a bene
Though I come after him with hawebake;
I ſpeke in proſe, and let him rimes make.
And with that word he with a ſobre chere
Began his Tale, and ſayde as ye ſhull here.

THE MAN OF LAWES TALE.

O SCATHFUL harm, condition of poverte,
With thirſt, with cold, with hunger, ſo confounded,
To aſken helpe thee ſhameth in thine herte,
If thou non aſk, ſo ſore art thou ywounded,
That veray nede unwrappeth al thy wound hid.
Maugre thin hed thou moſt for indigence
Or ſtele or begge, or borwe thy diſpence.

Thou blameſt Criſt, and ſayſt ful bitterly,
He miſdeparteth richeſſe temporal;
Thy neighebour thou witeſt ſinfully,
And ſayſt thou haſt to litel and he hath all:
Parfay (ſayſt thou) ſometime he reken ſhall,
Whan that his tayl ſhal brennen in the glede,
For he nought helpeth needful in hir nede.

Herken what is the ſentence of the wiſe,
Bet is to dien than have indigence,
Thy ſelve neighebour wol thee deſpiſe;
If thou be poure farewel thy reverence.
Yet of the wiſe man take this ſentence,
Alle the dayes of poure men ben wicke;
Beware therfore or thou come to that pricke.

If thou be poure, thy brother hateth thee,
And all thy frendes fleen fro thee, alas!
O riche marchants! ful of wele ben ye,
O noble, o prudent folk! as in this cas,
Your bagges ben not filled with ambes as,
But with ſis cink, that renneth for your chance;
At Criſtenmaſſe mery may ye dance.

Ye ſeken lond and ſee for your winninges;
As wiſe folk ye knowen all th' eſtat
Of regnes; ye ben fathers of tidinges
And tales both of pees and of debat:
I were right now of tales deſolat,
N'ere that a marchant, gon is many a yere,
Me taught a Tale which that ye ſhull here.

In Surrie whilom dwelt a compagnie
Of chapmen rich, and therto ſad and trewe,
That wide were ſenten hir ſpicerie,
Clothes of gold, and ſatins riche of hewe:
Hir chaffare was ſo thrifty and ſo newe,
That every wight hath deintee to chaffare
With hem, and eke to ſellen hem hir ware.

Now fell it that the maiſters of that ſort
Han ſhapen hem to Rome for to wende,
Were it for chapmanhood or for diſport,
Non other meſſage wolde they thider ſende,
But comen hemſelf to Rome, this is the ende;
And in ſwiche place as thought hem avantage
For hir entente they taken hir herbergage.

Sojourned han theſe marchants in that toun
A certain time, as fell to hir pleſance:
And ſo befell that the excellent renoun
Of the emperoures doughter, Dame Cuſtance,
Reported was with every circumſtance
Unto theſe Surrien marchants in ſwiche wiſe
Fro day to day as I ſhall you deviſe.

This was the commun vois of every man:
Our emperour of Rome, God him ſe,
A doughter hath that ſin the world began,
To recken as wel hire goodneſſe as beaute,
N'as never ſwiche another as is ſhe;
I pray to God in honour hire ſuſtene,
And wold ſhe were of all Europe the quene.

In hire is high beaute withouten pride,
Youthe withouten grenehed or folie:
To all hire werkes vertue is hire guide;
Humbleſſe hath ſlaien in hire tyrannie:
She is mirrour of alle curteſie,
Hire herte is veray chambre of holineſſe,
Hire hond miniſtre of fredom for almeſſe.

And al this vois was ſoth, as God is trewe;
But now to purpos let us turne agein.
Theſe marchants han don fraught hir ſhippes newe,
And whan they han this bliſful maiden ſein
Home to Surrie ben they went ful fayn,
And don hir nedes, as they han don yore,
And liven in wele; I can ſay you no more.

Now fell it that theſe marchants ſtood in grace
Of him that was the Soudan of Surrie;
For whan they came from any ſtrange place
He wold of his benigne curteſie
Make hem good chere, and beſily eſpie
Tidings of ſundry regnes, for to lere
The wonders that they mighte ſeen or here.

Amonges other thinges ſpecially
Theſe marchants han him told of Dame Cuſtance
So gret nobleſſe, in erneſt ſeriouſly,
That this Soudan hath caught ſo gret pleſance
To han hire figure in his remembrance,
That all his luſt and all his beſy cure
Was for to love hire while his lif may dure.

Paraventure in thilke large book
Which that men clepe the Heven ywritten was
With ſterres, whan that he his birthe took,
That he for love ſhuld han his deth, alas!
For in the ſterres, clerer than is glas,
Is writen, God wot, who ſo could it rede,
The deth of every man withouten drede.

In ſterres many a winter therbeforn
Was writ the deth of Hector, Achilles,
Of Pompey, Julius, or they were born;
The ſtrif of Thebes, and of Hercules,
Of Sampſon, Turnus, and of Socrates
The deth; but mennes wittes ben ſo dull
That no wight can wel rede it at the full.

This Soudan for his prive councel ſent,
And ſhortly of this matere for to pace,
He hath to hem declared his entent,
And ſayd hem certain, but he might have grace
To han Cuſtance, within a litel ſpace
He n'as but ded, and charged hem in hie
To ſhapen for his lif ſom remedie.

Diverſe men diverſe things ſaiden;
They argumentes caſten up and doun;
Many a ſubtil reſon forth they laiden;
They ſpeken of magike and abuſion;
But finally, as in concluſion,
They cannot ſeen in that non avantage,
Ne in non other way ſave mariage.

Than ſaw they therein ſwiche difficultee
By way of reſon, for to ſpeke all plain,
Becauſe ther was ſwiche diverſitee
Betwene hir bothe lawes, that they ſayn
They trowen that no Criſten prince wold ſayn
Wedden his childe under our law ſwete,
That us was yeven by Mahound our prophete.

And he anſwered, Rather than I leſe
Cuſtance I wol be criſtened doubteles:
I mote ben hires, I may non other cheſe,
I pray you hold your arguments in pees;
Saveth my lif, and beth not reccheles
To geten hire that hath my life in cure,
For in this wo I may not long endure.

What nedeth greter dilatation?
I ſay by tretiſe and ambaſſatrie,
And by the Popes mediatioun,
And all the chirche, and all the chevalrie,
That in deſtruction of Maumetrie,
And in encreſe of Criſtes lawe dere,
They ben accorded ſo as ye may here:
How that the Soudan and his baronage,
And all his lieges, ſhuld ycriſtened be,
And he ſhal han Cuſtance in mariage,
And certain gold, I n'ot what quantitee,
And hereto finden ſuffiſant ſuretee.
The ſame accord is ſworne on eyther ſide;
Now, fair Cuſtance, almighty God thee gide.

Now wolden ſom men waiten, as I geſſe,
That I ſhuld tellen all the purveiance
The which that the Emperour of his nobleſſe
Hath ſhapen for his doughter Dame Cuſtance.
Wel may men know that ſo gret ordinance
May no man tellen in a litel clauſe
As was arraied for ſo high a cauſe.

Biſhopes ben ſhapen with hire for to wende,
Lordes, ladies, and knightes of renoun,
And other folk ynow; this is the end:
And notified is thurghout all the toun
That every wight with gret devotioun
Should prayen Criſt that he this mariage
Receive in gree, and ſpede this viage.

The day is comen of hire departing,
I ſay the woful day fatal is come
That ther may be no longer tarying,
But forward they hem dreſſen all and ſome.
Cuſtance, that was with ſorwe all overcome,
Ful pale ariſt, and dreſſeth hire to wende,
For wel ſhe ſeth ther n'is non other ende.

Alas! what wonder is it though ſhe wept,
That ſhal be ſent to ſtrange nation
Fro frendes that ſo tendrely hire kept,
And to be bounde under ſubjection
Of on ſhe knoweth not his condition?
Houſbondes ben all good, and han ben yore,
That knowen wives, I dare ſay no more.

Fader, (ſhe ſaid) thy wretched child Cuſtance,
Thy yonge doughter, foſtered up ſo ſoft,
And ye, my moder, my ſoveraine pleſance
Over all thing, (out taken Criſt on loft)
Cuſtance your child hire recommendeth oft
Unto your grace, for I ſhal to Surrie,
Ne ſhal I never ſeen you more with eye.

Alas! unto the Barbare nation
I muſte gon, ſin that it is your will;
But Criſt, that ſtarfe for our redemption,
So yeve me grace his heſtes to fulfill,
I wretched woman no force though I ſpill:
Women are borne to thraldom and penance,
And to ben under mannes governance.

I trow at Troye whan Pirrus brake the wall
Or Ilion brent, or Thebes the citee,
Ne at Rome for the harm thurgh Hanniball,
That Romans hath venqueſhed times three,
N'as herd ſwiche tendre weping for pitee
As in the chambre was for hire parting;
But forth ſhe mote wheder ſhe wepe or ſing.

O firſte moving cruel firmament!
With thy diurnal ſwegh that croudeſt ay,
And hurtleſt all from eſt til occident,
That naturally wold hold another way,
Thy crouding ſet the heven in ſwiche array
At the beginning of this fierce viage
That cruel Mars hath ſlain this marriage.

Infortunat aſcendent tortuous,
Of which the lord is helpeles fall, alas!
Out of his angle into the derkeſt hous,
O Mars, o Atyzar! as in this cas;
O feble Mone! unhappy ben thy pas,
Thou knitteſt thee ther thou art not received,
Ther thou were wel fro thennes art thou weived.

Imprudent Emperour of Rome, alas!
Was ther no philoſophre in al thy toun?
Is no time bet than other in ſwiche cas?
Of viage is ther non electioun,
Namely to folk of high conditioun,
Nat whan a rote is of a birth yknowe?
Alas! we ben to lewed or to ſlow.

To ſhip is brought this woful faire maid
Solempnely, with every circumſtance:
Now Jeſu Criſt be with you all, ſhe ſaid.
Ther n'is no more, but Farewel, fair Cuſtance.
She peineth hire to make good countenance;
And forth I let hire ſayle in this manere,
And turne I wol againe to my matere.

The mother of Soudan, well of vices,
Espied hath hire sones pleine entente,
How he wol lete his old sacrifices;
And right anon she for her conseil sente,
And they ben comen to know what she mente;
And whan assembled was this folk in fere,
She set hire doun, and sayd as ye shul here:

Lordes, (she sayd) ye known everich on
How that my sone in point is for to lete.
The holy lawes of our Alkaron,
Yeven by Goddes Messager Mahomete;
But on avow to grete God I hete,
The lif shal rather out of my body sterte
Than Mahometes lawe out of myn herte.

What shuld us tiden of this newe lawe
But thraldom to our bodies and penance,
And afterward in helle to ben drawe,
For we reneied Mahound our creance?
But, Lordes, wol ye maken assurance,
As I shal say, assenting to my lore?
And I shal make us sauf for evermore.

They sworen and assented every man
To live with hire and die, and by hire stond;
And everich on, in the best wise he can,
To strengthen hire shal all his frendes fond.
And she hath this empryse ytaken in hond
Which ye shull heren that I shal devise,
And to hem all she spake right in this wise.

We shul first fein us Cristendom to take;
Cold water shal not greve us but a lite;
And I shal swiche a feste and revel make
That, as I trow, I shal the Soudan quite:
For tho his wif be cristened never so white
She shal have nede to wash away the rede
Though she a font of water with hire lede.

O Soudanneste! rote of iniquitee,
Virago thou Semyramee the second,
O serpent under femininitee,
Like to the serpent depe in helle ybound,
O feined woman! all that may confound
Vertue and innocence, thurgh thy malice
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vice.

O Sathan envious! sin thilke day
That thou were chased from our heritage,
Wel knowest thou to woman the olde way:
Thou madest Eva bring us in servage,
Thou wolt fordon this Cristen mariage:
Thin instrument so (wala wa the while!)
Makest thou of women whan thou wolt begile.

This Soudanneste, whom I thus blame and warrie,
Let prively hire conseil gon hir way:
What shuld I in this Tale longer tarie?
She rideth to the Soudan on a day,
And sayd him that she wold reinie hire lay,
And Cristendom of prestes hondes fong,
Repenting hire she Hethen was so long;

Besseching him to don hire that honour
That she might han the Cristen folk to fest;
To plesen hem I wol do my labour.
The Soudan saith, I wol don at your hest,
And kneling thanked hire of that request;
So glad he was ne n'iste not what to say,
She kist hire sone, and home she goth hire way.

Arrived ben these Cristen folk to lond
In Surrie, with a gret solempne route,
And hastily this Soudan sent his sond
First to his mother and all the regne aboute,
And sayd his wif was comen out of doute,
And praide hem for to riden again the quene,
The honour of his regne to sustene.

Gret was the presse, and riche was th' array
Of Surriens and Romanes met in fere.
The mother of the Soudan riche and gay
Received hire with all so glad a chere
As any mother might hire doughter dere;
And to the nexte citee ther beside
A soste pas solempnely they ride.

Nought trow I the triumph of Julius,
Of which that Lucan maketh swiche a bost,
Was realler or more curious
Than was th' assemblee of this blisful host;
Butte this scorpion, this wicked gost,
The Soudanesse, for all hire flattering
Cast under this ful mortally to sting.

The Soudan cometh himself sone after this
So really, that wonder is to tell,
And welcometh hire with alle joy and blis.
And thus in mirth and joye I let hem dwell;
The fruit of this matere is that I tell
Whan time came, men thought it for the best
That revel stint, and men go to hir rest.

The time come is this olde Soudanesse
Ordeined hath the feste of which I tolde,
And to the feste Cristen folk him dresse
In general, ya, bothe yonge and olde.
Ther may men fest and realtee beholde,
And deintees mo than I can you devise;
But all to dere they bought it or they rise.

O soden wo, that ever art successour
To worldly blis! spreint is with bitternesse
Th' ende of the joye of our worldly labour:
Wo occupieth the fyn of our gladnesse.
Herken this conseil for thy sikernesse,
Upon thy glade day have in thy minde
The unware wo of harme that cometh behinde.

For shortly for to tellen at a word,
The Soudan and the Cristen everich on
Ben all to-hewe and stiked at the bord
But it were only Dame Custance alone.
This old Soudanesse, this cursed crone,
Hath with hire frendes don this cursed dede,
For she hireself wold all the contree lede.

Ne ther was Surrien non that was converted,
That of the conseil of the Soudan wot,
That he n'as all to-hewe er he asterted;
And Custance han they taken anon fote-hot,
And in a ship all stereles (God wot)
They han hire set, and bidden hire lerne sayle
Out of Surrie againward to Itaille.

A certain tresor that she thither ladde,
And soth to sayn vitaille gret plentee,
They han hire yeven, and clothes eke she hadde,
And forth she sayleth in the salte see.
O my Custance! ful of benignitee,
O Emperoures yonge doughter dere!
He that is Lord of fortune be thy stere.

She bleſſeth hire, and with ful pitious vois
Unto the crois of Criſt thus ſayde ſhe:
O clere, o weleful auter, holy crois!
Red of the Lambes blood ful of pitee,
That weſh the world fro the old iniquitee,
Me fro the fende and fro his clawes kepe
That day that I ſhal drenchen in the depe.
Victorious tree, protection of trewe,
That only worthy were for to bere
The King of heven with his woundes newe,
The white Lamb, that hurt was with a ſpere;
Flemer of fendes out of him and here
On which thy limmes faithfully extenden,
Me kepe, and yeve me might my lif to amenden.
Yeres and dayes fleet this creature
Thurghout the ſee of Grece, unto the Straite
Of Maroc, as it was hire aventure:
On many a ſory mele now may ſhe baite;
After hire deth ful often may ſhe waite,
Or that the wilde waves wol hire drive
Unto the place ther as ſhe ſhal arive.
Men mighten aſken why ſhe was not ſlain?
Eke at the feſte who might hire body ſave?
And I anſwer to that demand again,
Who ſaved Daniel in the horrible cave,
Ther every wight ſave he, maſter or knave,
Was with the leon frette or he aſterte?
No wight but God, that he bare in his herte.
God liſt to ſhew his wonderful miracle
In hire, for we ſhuld ſeen his mighty werkes:
Criſt, which that is to every harm triacle,
By certain menes oft, as knewen clerkes,
Doth thing for certain ende that ful derke is
To mannes wit, that for our ignorance
Ne can nat know his prudent purveiance.
Now ſith ſhe was not at the feſte yſlawe,
Who kepte hire fro the drenching in the ſee?
Who kept Jonas in the fiſhes mawe,
Til he was ſpouted up at Ninevee?
Wel may men know it was no wight but he
That kept the peple Ebraike fro drenching,
With drye feet thurghout the ſee paſſing.
Who bade the foure ſpirits of tempeſt,
That power han to anoyen lond and ſee,
Both north and ſouth, and alſo weſt and eſt,
Anoyen nether ſee, ne lond, ne tree?
Sothly the commander of that was he
That fro the tempeſt ay this woman kepte
As wel whan ſhe awoke as whan ſhe ſlepte.
Wher might this woman mete and drinke have?
Three yere and more how laſteth hire vitaille?
Who fed the Egyptian Mary in the cave
Or in deſert? no wight but Criſt *ſans faille*.
Five thouſand folk it was a gret marvaille
With loves five and fiſhes two to fede:
God ſent his foyſon at hire grete nede.
She driveth forth into our ocean
Thurghout our wide ſee, til at the laſt
Under an hold, that nempnen I ne can,
Fer in Northumberlond, the wave hire caſt,
And in the ſand hire ſhip ſtiked ſo faſt
That thennes wolde it not in all a tide:
The wille of Criſt was that ſhe ſhulde abide.
The Conſtable of the caſtle doun is fare
To ſeen this wrecke, and al the ſhip he ſought,
And fond this very woman ful of care;
He fond alſo the treſour that ſhe brought:
In hire langage mercy ſhe beſought,
The lif out of hire body for to twinne,
Hire to deliver of wo that ſhe was inne.
A maner Latin corrupt was hire ſpeche,
But algate therby was ſhe underſtond.
The Conſtable, whan him liſt no longer ſeche,
This woful woman brought he to the lond.
She kneleth doun, and thanketh Goddes fond;
But what ſhe was ſhe wolde no man ſeye
For foule ne faire, though that ye ſtrulde deye.
She ſaid ſhe was ſo maſed in the ſee
That ſhe forgate hire minde, by hire trouth.
The Conſtable hath of hire ſo gret pitee,
And eke his wif, that they wepen for routh:
She was ſo diligent withouten flouth
To ſerve and pleſen everich in that place,
That all hire love that loken in hire face.
The Conſtable and Dame Hermegild his wif
Were Payenes, and that contree every wher;
But Hermegild loved Cuſtance as hire lif;
And Cuſtance hath ſo long ſojourned ther
In oriſons, with many a bitter tere,
Til Jeſu hath converted thurgh his grace
Dame Hermegild, Conſtableſſe of that place.
In all that lond no Criſten dorſte route;
All Criſten folk ben fled fro that contree
Thurgh Payenes, that conquereden all aboute
The plages of the north by lond and ſee.
To Wales fled the Chriſtianitee
Of olde Bretons dwelling in this ile;
Ther was hir refuge fer the mene while.
But yet n'ere Criſten Bretons ſo exiled
That ther n'ere ſom which in hir privitee
Honoured Criſt, and Hethen folk begiled,
And neigh the caſtle ſwiche ther dwelten three:
That on of hem was blind, and might not ſee,
But it were with thilke eyen of his minde,
With which men mowen ſee whan they ben blinde.
Bright was the ſonne as in that ſommers day,
For which the Conſtable and his wif alſo,
And Cuſtance, han ytake the righte way
Toward the ſee a furlong way or two,
To plaien and to romen to and fro,
And in hir walk this blinde man they mette,
Croked and olde, with eyen faſt yſhette.
In the name of Criſt, (cried this blinde Breton)
Dame Hermegild, yeve me my ſight again.
This lady wexe afraied of that ſoun,
Leſt that hire huſbond, ſhortly for to ſain,
Wold hire for Jeſu Criſtes love have ſlain,
Till Cuſtance made hire bold, and bad hire werche
The will of Criſt, as doughter of holy cherche.
The Conſtable wexe abaſhed of that ſight,
And ſayde, What amounteth all this fare?
Cuſtance anſwered, Sire, it is Criſtes might,
That helpeth folk out of the fendes ſnare:
And ſo ferforth ſhe gan our lay declare,
That ſhe the Conſtable, er that it were eve,
Converted, and on Criſt made him beleve.

This Conſtable was not lord of the place
Of which I ſpeke, ther as he Cuſtance fond,
But kept it ſtrongly many a winter ſpace
Under Alla King of Northumberlond,
That was ful wiſe, and worthy of his hond
Againe the Scottes, as men may wel here;
But tourne I wol againe to my matere.

Sathan, that ever us waiteth to begile,
Saw of Cuſtance all hire perfectioun,
And caſt anon how he might quite hire while,
And made a yonge knight, that dwelt in that toun,
Love hire ſo hote of ſoule affectioun,
That verily him thought that he ſhuld ſpille
But he of hire might ones han his wille.

He woeth hire, but it availeth nought;
She wolde do no ſinne by no wey;
And for deſpit he compaſſed his thought
To maken hire on ſhameful deth to dey:
He waiteth whan the Conſtable is away,
And privily upon a night he crepte
In Hermegildes chambre while ſhe ſlepte.

Wery, forwaked in hire oriſons,
Slepeth Cuſtance, and Hermegilde alſo.
This knight, thurgh Sathanes temptations,
All ſoftely is to the bed ygo,
And cut the throte of Hermegilde atwo,
And layd the bloody knif by Dame Cuſtance,
And went his way, ther God yeve him miſchance.

Sone after cometh this Conſtable home again,
And eke Alla, that king was of that lond,
And ſaw his wife deſpitouſly yſlain,
For which ful oft he wept and wrong his hond;
And in the bed the blody knif he fond
By Dame Cuſtance. Alas! what might ſhe ſay!
For veray wo hire wit was all away.

To King Alla was told all this miſchance,
And eke the time, and wher, and in what wiſe,
That in a ſhip was fonden this Cuſtance,
As here before ye han herd me deviſe:
The kinges herte of pitee gan agriſe
Whan he ſaw ſo benigne a creature
Fall in diſeſe and in miſaventure.

For as the lamb toward his deth is brought,
So ſtant this innocent beforn the king:
This falſe knight, that hath this treſon wrought,
Bereth hire in hond that ſhe hath don this thing:
But natheles there was gret murmuring
Among the peple, and ſayn they cannot geſſe
That ſhe had don ſo great a wickedneſſe;

For they han ſeen hire ever ſo vertuous,
And loving Hermegild right as hire lif.
Of this bare witneſſe everich in that hous,
Save he that Hermegild ſlow with his knif.
This gentil king hath caught a gret motif
Of this witneſs, and thought he wold enquere
Deper in this cas, trouthe for to lere.

Alas! Cuſtance, thou haſt no champion,
Ne fighten canſt thou not, ſo wala wa!
But he that ſtarf for our redemption,
And bond Sathan, and yet lith ther he lay,
So be thy ſtronge champion this day:
For but if Criſt on thee miracle kithe,
Withouten gilt thou ſhalt be ſlain as ſwithe.

She ſet hire doun on knees, and thus ſhe ſayde;
Immortal God! that ſavedſt Suſanne
Fro falſe bleme, and thou merciful mayde,
Mary I mene, doughter to Seint Anne,
Beforn whos child angels ſingen Oſanne.
If I be gilteles of this felonie
My ſocour be, or elles ſhal I die.

Have ye not ſeen ſomtime a pale face
(Among a prees) of him that hath ben lad
Toward his deth, where as he getteth no grace,
And ſwiche a colour in his face hath had,
Men mighten know him that was ſo beſtad
Amonges all the faces in that route,
So ſtant Cuſtance, and loketh hire aboute.

O quenes living in proſperitee,
Ducheſſes, and ye ladies everich on!
Haveth ſom routhe on hire adverſitee,
An emperoures doughter ſtant alone;
She hath no wight to whom to make hire mone.
O blood real, that ſtondeſt in this drede,
Fer ben the frendes in thy grete nede!

This Alla king hath ſwiche compaſſioun,
As gentil herte is ful filled of pitee,
That fro his eyen ran the water doun.
Now haſtily do fecche a book, quod he,
And if this knight wol ſweren how that ſhe
This woman ſlow, yet wol we us aviſe,
Whom that we wol that ſhal ben our juſtice.

A Breton book, written with Evangiles,
Was fet, and on this book he ſwore anon
She giltif was, and in the mene whiles
An hond him ſmote upon the nekke bone,
That doun he fell at ones as a ſtone,
And both his eyen broſt out of his face
In ſight of every body in that place.

A voice was herd, in general audience,
That ſayd, Thou haſt deſclandered gilteles
The doughter of holy chirche in high preſence
Thus haſt thou don, and yet hold I my pees.
Of this mervaille agaſt was all the prees;
As maſed folk they ſtonden everich on
For drede of wreche, ſave Cuſtance alone.

Gret was the drede and eke the repentance
Of hem that hadden wronge ſuſpection
Upon this ſely innocent Cuſtance:
And for this miracle, in concluſion,
And by Cuſtances mediation,
The king, and many another in that place,
Converted was, thanked be Criſtes grace.

This falſe knight was ſlain for his untrouthe
By jugement of Alla haſtily;
And yet Cuſtance had of his deth gret routhe;
And after this Jeſus of his mercy
Made Alla wedden ful ſolempnely
This holy woman, that is ſo bright and ſhene;
And thus hath Criſt ymade Cuſtance a quene.

But who was woful (if I ſhall not lie)
Of this wedding but Donegild, and no mo,
The kinges mother, full of tyrannie?
Hire thoughte hire curſed herte braſt atwo;
She wolde not that hire ſone had do ſo:
Hire thoughte a deſpit that he ſhulde take
So ſtrange a creature unto his make.

Me liſt not of the chaf ne of the ſtre
Maken ſo long a tale as of the corn,
What ſhuld I tellen of the realtee

Of this marriage, or which cours goth beforn,
Who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn?
The fruit of every tale is for to say;
They ete and drink, and dance, and sing, and play.
They gon to bed, as it was skill and right,
For though that wives ben ful holy thinges,
They moften take in patience a night
Swiche maner neceſſaries, as ben pleſinges
To folk that han ywedded hem with ringes.
And lay a lite hir holineſs aſide
As for the time, it may no bet betide.
On hire he gat a knave childe anon,
And to a biſhop, and his Conſtable eke,
He toke his wif to kepe, when he is gon
To Scotland ward, his fomen for to ſeke.
Now faire Cuſtance, that is ſo humble and meke,
So long is gen with childe til that ſtill
She halt hire chambre, abiding Criſtes will.
The time is come, a knave child ſhe bere;
Manricius at the fontſtone they him calle.
This Conſtable doth forth come a meſſager,
And wrote unto his king that cleped was Alle,
How that this bliſful tiding is befalle,
And other tidinges ſpedeful for to ſay.
He hath the lettre, and forth he goth his way.
This meſſager, to don his avantage,
Unto the kinges mother rideth ſwithe,
And ſaluceth hire ful faire in his langage.
Madame, quod he, ye may be glad and blithe,
And thanken God an hundred thouſand ſithe;
My lady quene hath child, withouten doute,
To joy and bliſſe of all this regne aboute.
Lo here the lettre ſeled of this thing,
That I moſt bere in all the haſt I may:
If ye wol ought unto your ſone the king,
I am your ſervant bothe night and day.
Donegilde anſwerd, As now at this time nay;
But here I wol all night thou take thy reſt,
To-morwe wol I ſay thee what me leſt.
This meſſager drank ſadly ale and wine,
And ſtolen were his lettres prively
Out of his box, while he ſlept as a ſwine,
And contrefeted was ful ſubtilly
Another lettre, wrought ful finfully,
Unto the king directe of this matere
Fro his Conſtable, as ye ſhal after here.
This lettre ſpake, the quene delivered was
Of ſo horrible a fendliche creature,
That in the caſtle non ſo hardy was
That any while dorſt therein endure:
The mother was an elf by aventure
Ycome, by charmes or by ſorcerie,
And everich man hateth hire compagnie.
Wo was this king when he this lettre had ſein.
But to no wight he told his ſorwes ſore,
But of his owen hand he wrote again;
Welcome the ſonde of Criſt for evermore
To me, that am now lerned in his lore:
Lord, welcome be thy luſt and thy pleſance;
My luſt I put all in thyn ordinance.
Kepeth this child, al be it foule or faire,
And eke my wif, unto min home coming:
Criſt whan him liſt may ſenden me an heire
More agreable than this to my liking.
This lettre he ſeled, prively weping,
Which to the meſſager was taken ſone,
And forth he goth, there is no more to done.
O meſſager fulfilled of dronkeneſſe!
Strong is thy breth, thy limmes faitren ay,
And thou bewreieſt alle ſecreneſſe;
Thy mind is lorne, thou jangleſt as a jay;
Thy face is tourned in a new array:
Ther dronkeneſſe regneth in any route
Ther is no conſeil hid withouten doute.
O Donegild! I ne have non Engliſh digne
Unto thy malice and thy tyrannie,
And therfore to the fende I thee reſigne.
Let him enditen of thy traitorie.
Fy, manniſh, fy! o nay, by God I lie;
Fy, fendliche ſpirit! for I dare well telle,
Though thou here walke, thy ſpirit is in helle.
This meſſager cometh fro the king again,
And at the kinges modres court he light,
And ſhe was of this meſſager ful fayn,
And pleſed him in all that ever ſhe might.
He dranke and wel his girdel underpight;
He ſlepeth and he ſnoreth in his giſe
All night until the ſonne gan ariſe.
Eft were his lettres ſtolen everich on,
And contrefeted lettres in this wiſe.
The king commanded his Conſtable anon,
Up peine of hanging and of high jewiſe,
That he ne ſhulde ſoffran in no wiſe
Cuſtance within his regne for to abide
Three daies and a quarter of a tide;
But in the ſame ſhip as he hire fond
Hire and hire yonge ſone, and all hire gere,
He ſhulde put, and croude hire fro the lond,
And charge hire that ſhe never eft come there.
O my Cuſtance! wel may thy ghoſt have fere,
And ſleping in thy dreme ben in penance,
Whan Donegild caſt all this ordinance.
This meſſager on morwe whan he awoke
Unto the caſtel halt the nexte way,
And to the Conſtable he the lettre toke;
And whan that he this pitous lettre ſey
Ful oft he ſayd Alas, and wala wa!
Lord Chriſt, quod he, how may this world endure,
So ful of ſinne is many a creature?
O mighty God! if that it be thy will,
Sin thou art rightful juge, how may it be
That thou wolt ſoffren innocence to ſpill,
And wicked folk regne in proſperitee?
A! good Cuſtance, alas! ſo wo is me,
That I mote be thy turmentour, or dey
On ſhames deth, ther is non other wey.
Wepen both yonge and olde in all that place
Whan that the king this curſed lettre ſent:
And Cuſtance with a dedly pale face
The fourthe day toward the ſhip ſhe went;
But natheleſs ſhe taketh in good entent
The will of Criſt, and kneling on the ſtrond
She ſayde, Lord, ay welcome be thy ſond.
He that me kepte fro the falſe blame,
While I was in the lond amonges you,
He can me kepe fro harme and eke fro ſhame
In the ſalt ſee, although I ſe not how:
As ſtrong as ever he was he is yet now:
In him truſt I, and in his mother dere,
That is to me my ſail and eke my ſtere.

As he that is of Criſten folk the flour,
Send any child, but it is bet to deme
He went himſelf, and ſo it may wel ſeme.
This emperour hath granted gentilly
To come to dinner as he him beſoughte;
And wel rede I he loked beſily
Upon this child, and on his doughter thought.
Alla goth to his inne, and as him ought
Arraied for this feſte in every wiſe
As ferforth as his conning may ſuffice.
The morwe came, and Alla gain him dreſſe,
And eke his wif, this emperour to mete;
And forth they ride in joye and in gladneſſe;
And whan ſhe ſaw hire fader in the ſtrete,
She light adoun and falleth him to fete.
Fader, quod ſhe, your yonge child Cuſtance
Is now ful clene out of your remembrance.
I am your doughter, your Cuſtance, quod ſhe,
That whilom ye han ſent into Surrie;
It am I, fader, that in the ſalte ſee
Was put alone, and dampned for to die:
Now, goode fader, I you mercie crie;
Send me no more into non Hetheneſſe,
But thanketh my lord here of his kindneſſe.
Who can the pitous joye tellen all
Betwix hem thre ſin they ben thus ymette?
But of my Tale make an ende I ſhal,
The day goth faſte, I wol no longer lette.
Thiſe glade folk to dinner ben yſette;
In joye and bliſſe at mete I let hem dwell,
A thouſand fold wel more than I can tell.
This child Maurice was ſithen Emperour
Made by the Pope, and lived Chriſtenly;
To Criſtes chirche did he gret honour:
But I let all his ſtorie paſſen by;
Of Cuſtance is my Tale ſpecially;
In the olde Romane geſtes men may find
Maurices lif, I bere it not in mind.
This King Alla, when he his time ſey,
With his Cuſtance, his holy wif ſo ſwete,
To Englond ben they come the righte wey,
Ther as they live in joye and in quiete:
But litel while it laſteth I you hete;
Joye of this world for time wol not abide,
Fro day to night it changeth as the tide.
Who lived ever in ſwiche delite o day
That him ne meved eyther conſcience,
Or ire, or talent, or ſom kin affray,
Envie, or pride, or paſſion, or offence?
I ne ſay but for this end this ſentence,
That litel while in joye or in pleſance
Laſteth the bliſſe of Alla with Cuſtance.
For Deth, that taketh of hie and lowe his rente,
Whan paſſed was a yere, even as I geſſe,
Out of this world this King Alla he hente,
For whom Cuſtance hath ful gret heveneſſe;
Now let us praien God his ſoule bleſſe:
And Dame Cuſtance, finally to ſay,
Toward the toun of Rome goth hire way.
To Rome is come this holy creature,
And findeth ther hire frendes hole and ſound;
Now is ſhe ſcaped all hire aventure:
And whan that ſhe hire fader hath yfound,
Doun on hire knees falleth ſhe to ground,
Weping for tenderneſſe in herte blithe,
She herieth God an hundred thouſand ſithe.
In vertue and in holy almeſſe dede
They liven alle, and never aſonder wende;
Till deth departeth hem this lif they lede:
And fareth now wel, my Tale is at an ende.
Now Jeſu Criſt, that of his might may ſende
Joye after wo, governe us in his grace,
And kepe us alle that ben in this place.

THE WIF OF BATHES PROLOGUE*.

Experience, though non auctoritee
Were in this world, is right ynough for me
To ſpeke of wo that is in mariage;
For, Lordings, ſin I twelf yere was of age
(Thanked be God that is eterne on live)
Huſbondes at chirche dore have I had five,
(If I ſo often might han wedded be)
And all were worthy men in hir degree.
But me was told, not longe time agon is,
That ſithen Criſt ne went never but onis
To wedding in the Cane of Galilee,
That by that ilke enſample taught he me
That I ne ſhulde wedded be but ones.
Lo, herke eke, which a ſharp word for the nones,
Beſide a welle Jeſu God and man
Spake in repreſe of the Samaritan;
Thou haſt yhadde five huſbonds, ſayde he,
And thilke man that now hath wedded thee
Is not thyn huſband. Thus ſaid he certain;
What that he ment therby I can not ſain;
But that I aſke why that the fifthe man
Was non huſbond to the Samaritan?
How many might ſhe have in mariage?
Yet herd I never tellen in min age
Upon this noumbre diffinitioun;
Men may devine and gloſen up and doun.
But wel I wot expreſſe withouten lie,
God bad us for to wex and multiplie;
That gentil text can I wel underſtond:
Eke wel I wot he ſayd that min huſbond
Shuld leve fader and moder and take to me;
But of no noumbre mention made he
Of bigamie or of octogamie;
Why ſhuld men than ſpeke of it vilanie?
Lo here the wiſe King, Dan Salomon,
I trowe he hadde wives mo than on,
(As wolde God it leful were to me
To be refreſhed half ſo oft as he)
Which a gift of God had he for alle his wives?
No man hath ſwiche that in this world on live is.
God wot this noble king, as to my witte,
The firſte night had many a mery fitte
With eche of hem, ſo wel was him on live.
Bleſſed be God that I have wedded five;
Welcome the ſixthe whan that ever he ſhall;
For ſith I wol not kepe me chaſte in all,
Whan min huſband is fro the world ygone
Som Criſten man ſhal wedden me anon;
For than the apoſtle ſaith that I am fre
To wedde a' Goddes half wher it liketh me;
He ſaith that to be wedded is no ſinne;
Better is to be wedded than to brinne.
What rekketh me though folk ſay vilanie
Of ſhrewed Lamech and his bigamie?
I wot wel Abraham was an holy man,
And Jacob eke, as fer as ever I can,
And eche of hem had wives mo than two,
And many another holy man alſo.
Wher can ye ſeen in any maner age
That highe God defended mariage
By expreſſe word? I pray you telleth me,
Or wher commanded he virginitee?
I wot as wel as ye, it is no drede,
The apoſtle, whan he ſpake of maidenhede,
He ſaid that precept thereof had he non;
Men may conſeille a woman to ben on,
But conſeilling is no commandement;
He put it in our own jugement.
For hadde God commanded maidenhede,
Than had he dampned wedding out of drede;
And certes if ther were no ſede yſowe
Virginitee than whereof ſhuld it growe?
Poule dorſte not commanden at the leſt
A thing of which his maiſter yaf non heſt.
The dart is ſette up for virginitee,
Catch who ſo may, who renneth beſt let ſee.

* The want of a few verſes to connect this Prologue with the preceding Tale was perceived long ago, and the defect was attempted to be ſupplied by the author of the following lines, which in mſ. *B.* are prefixed to the common Prologue;

Oure Ooſt gan tho to loke up anon.
Gode men, quod he, herkeneth everich one,
As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale
This Marchant hath itold a mery Tale,
Howe Januarie hadde a lither jape,
His wyf put in his hood an ape.
But hereof I wil leve off as now.
Dame Wyf of Bathe, quod he, I pray you
Telle us a Tale now nexte after this.
Sir Ooſt, quod ſhe, ſo God my ſoule bliſs
As I, fully thereto wil conſente,
And alſo it is myn hole entente
To done yow alle diſporte as that I can.
But holde me excuſed; I am a woman:
I can not reherſe as theſe clerkes kune.
And right anon ſhe hath hir Tale bygunne.
Experience, &c.

These lines are printed here as a juſtification for not inſerting them in the text.

But this word is not take of every wight,
But ther as God wol yeve it of his might,
I wot wel that the apoſtle was a maid,
But natheles, though that he wrote and ſaid
He wold that every wight were ſwiche as he,
All n'is but conſeil to virginitee.
And for to ben a wif he yaf me leve,
Of indulgence, ſo n'is it non repreve
To wedden me, if that my make die,
Without exception of bigamie;
All were it good no woman for to touche,
(He ment as in his bed or in his couche)
For peril is both fire and tow to aſſemble;
Ye know what this enſample may reſemble.
This is all and ſom, he held virginitee
More parfit than wedding in freeltee:
(Freeltee clepe I, but if that he and ſhe
Wold lede hir lives all in chaſtitee)
I graunt it wel, I have of non envie
Who maidenhed preferre to bigamie;
It liketh hem to be clene in body and goſt:
Of min eſtat I wol not maken boſt:
For wel ye know a lord in his houſhold
Ne hath nat every veſſell all of gold:
Som ben of tree, and don hir lord ſervice.
God clepeth folk to him in ſondry wiſe,
And everich hath of God a propre gift,
Som this, ſom that, as that him liketh ſhift.
Virginitee is gret perfection,
And continence eke with devotion;
But Criſt, that of perfection is welle,
Ne bade not every wight he ſhuld go ſelle
All that he had and yeve it to the poure,
And in ſwiche wiſe follow him and his lore:
He ſpake to hem that wold live parfitly,
And, Lordings, (by your leve) that am nat I:
I wol beſtow the flour of all myn age
In th' actes and the fruit of mariage.
Tell me alſo to what concluſion
Were membres made of generation,
And of ſo parfit wiſe a wight ywrought?
Truſteth me wel they were nat made for nought.
Gloſe who ſo wol, and ſay bothe up and doun,
That they were made for purgatioun
Of urine, and of other thinges ſmalle,
And eke to know a female from a male:
And for non other cauſe? ſay ye no?
The experience wot wel it is not ſo.
So that the clerkes be not with me wroth;
I ſay this, that they maked ben for both;
This is to ſayn, for office and for eſe
Of engendrure, ther we not God diſpleſe.
Why ſhuld men elles in hir bookes ſette
That man ſhal yelden to his wif hire dette?
Now wherwith ſhuld he make his payement
If he ne uſed his ſely inſtrument?
Than were they made upon a creature
To purge urine, and eke for engendrure.
But I ſay not that every wight is hold,
That hath ſwiche harneis as I to you told,
To gon and uſen hem in engendrure;
Than ſhuld men take of chaſtitee no cure.
Criſt was a maide, and ſhapen as a man,
And many a ſeint, ſith that this world began,
Yet lived they ever in parfit chaſtitee;
I n'ill envie with no virginitee.
Let hem with bred of pured whete be fed,
And let us wives eten barly bred:
And yet with barly bred, Mark tellen can,
Our Lord Jeſu refreſhed many a man.
In ſwiche eſtat as God hath cleped us
I wol perſever, I n'am not precious.
In wif hode wol I uſe min inſtrument
As frely as my Maker hath it ſent.
If I be dangerous, God yeve me ſorwe,
Min huſband ſhal it have both even and morwe,
Whan that him lift come forth and pay his dette.
An huſbond wol I have, I wol not lette,
Which ſhal be both my detour and my thrall,
And have his tribulation withall
Upon his fleſh, while that I am his wif.
I have the power during all my lif
Upon his propre body, and nat he;
Right thus the apoſtle told it unto me,
And bad our huſbonds for to love us wel:
All this ſentence me liketh every del.
Up ſtert the Pardoner, and that anon;
Now, Dame, quod he, by God and by Seint John
Ye ben a noble prechour in this cas:
I was about to wed a wif, alas!
What? ſhuld I bie it on my fleſh ſo dere?
Yet had I lever wed no wif to-yere.
Abide, quod ſhe, my Tale is not begonne;
Nay, thou ſhalt drinken of another tonne,
Er that I go, ſhall ſavor worſe than ale:
And whan that I have told thee forth my Tale
Of tribulation in mariage,
Of which I am expert in al min age,
(This is to ſayn myſelf hath ben the whippe)
Than maieſt thou cheſen wheder thou wolt ſippe
Of thilke tonne that I ſhal abroche:
Beware of it er thou to neigh approche,
For I ſhal tel enſamples mo than ten.
Who ſo that n'ill beware by other men
By him ſhal other men corrected be:
Thiſe ſame wordes writeth Ptholomee,
Rede in his Almajeſtie, and take it there.
Dame, I wold pray you, if your will it were,
Sayde this Pardoner, as ye began
Tell forth your Tale, and ſpareth for no man,
And teecheth us yonge men of your practike.
Gladly, quod ſhe, ſin that it may you like,
But that I pray to all this compagnie,
If that I ſpeke after my fantaſie,
As taketh not a greefe of that I ſay,
For min entente is non but for to play.
Now, Sires, than wol I tell you forth my Tale.
As ever mote I drinken win or ale
I ſhal ſay ſoth, the huſbondes that I had
As three of hem were good and two were bad.
The three were goode men and riche and olde;
Unnethes mighten they the ſtatute holde
In which that they were bounden unto me;
Ye wot wel what I mene of this parde.
As God me helpe I laugh whan that I thinke
How pitouſly a-night I made hem ſwinke,
But by my ſay I tolde of it no ſtore:
They had me yeven hir lond and hir treſore;

Me neded not do lenger diligence
To win hir love or don hem reverence.
They loved me ſo wel, by God above,
That I ne tolde no deintee of hir love.
A wiſe woman wol beſie hire ever in on
To geten hir love ther as ſhe hath non.
But ſith I had hem holly in min hond,
And that they hadde yeven me all hir lond,
What ſhuld I taken kepe hem for to pleſe,
But it were for my profit or min eſe?
I ſet hem ſo a-werke by my ſay,
That many a night they ſongen Wala wa!
The bacon was not fet for hem I trow
That ſom men have in Eſſex at Donmow.
I governed hem ſo wel after my lawe
That eche of hem ful blisful was and fawe
To bringen me gay thinges fro the feyre:
They were ful glade whan I ſpake him fayre;
For God it wot I chidde hem ſpitouſly.
Now herkeneth how I bare me proprely.
Ye wiſe wives, that can underſtond,
Thus ſhul ye ſpeke, and bere hem wrong on hond,
For half ſo boldely can ther no man
Sweren and lien as a woman can.
(I ſay not this by wives that ben wiſe,
But if it be whan they hem miſaviſe.)
A wiſe wif, if that ſhe can hire good,
Shal beren hem on hond the cow is wood,
And taken witneſſe of hire owen mayd
Of hir aſſent; but herkeneth how I ſayd.
Sire olde Kaynard, is this thin aray?
Why is my neigheboures wif ſo gay?
She is honoured over al wher ſhe goth;
I ſit at home, I have no thrifty cloth.
What doſt thou at my neigheboures hous?
Is ſhe ſo faire? art thou ſo amorous?
What, rowneſt thou with our maide? *benedicite!*
Sire olde Lechour, let thy japes be.
And if I have a goſſib or a frend,
(Withouten gilt) thou chideſt as a fend
If that I walke or play unto his hous.
Thou comeſt hom as dronken as a mous,
And precheſt on thy benche with evil preſe:
Thou ſayſt to me, It is a gret meſchieſe
To wed a poure woman for coſtage;
And if that ſhe be riche of high parage,
Than ſayſt thou that it is a tourmentrie
To ſoffre hire pride and hire melancolie:
And if that ſhe be faire, thou veray knave,
Thou ſayſt that every holour wol hire have;
She may no while in chaſtitee abide
That is affailed upon every ſide.
Thou ſayſt ſom folk deſire us for richeſſe,
Som for our ſhape, and ſom for our fairneſſe,
And ſom for ſhe can eyther ſing or dance,
And ſom for gentilleſſe and daliance,
Som for hire hondes and hire armes ſmale:
Thus goth all to the devil by thy tale.
Thou ſayſt men may not kepe a caſtel wal,
It may ſo long aſſailed be over al.
And if that ſhe be foul, thou ſayſt that ſhe
Coveteth every man that ſhe may ſee;
For as a ſpanile ſhe wol on him lepe
Til ſhe may finden ſom man hire to chepe.
Ne non ſo grey goos goth ther in the lake
(As ſayſt thou) that wol ben without a make:
And ſayſt it is an hard thing for to welde
A thing that no man wol his thankes helde.
Thus ſayſt thou, lorel, whan thou goſt to bed,
And that no wiſe man nedeth for to wed,
Ne no man that entendeth unto heven.
With wilde thonder dint and firy leven
Mote thy welked nekke be to-broke.
Thou ſayſt that dropping houſes and eke ſmoke,
And chiding wives, maken men to flee
Out of hir owen hous. A, *benedicite!*
What aileth ſwiche an old man for to chide?
Thou ſayſt we wives wol our vices hide
Til we be faſt, and than we wol hem ſhewe.
Wel may that be a proverbe of a ſhrewe.
Thou ſayſt that oxen, aſſes, hors, and houndes,
They ben aſſaied at diverſe ſtoundes,
Baſines, lavoures, or that men hem bie,
Spones, ſtooles, and all ſwiche huſbondrie,
And ſo ben pottes, clothes, and aray,
But folk of wives maken non aſſay
Til they ben wedded, olde dotard ſhrewe,
And than, ſayſt thou, we wol our vices ſhewe.
Thou ſayſt alſo that it diſpleſeth me
But if that thou wolt preiſen my beautee,
And but thou pore alway upon my face,
And clepe me Faire Dame in every place;
And but thou make a feſte on thilke day
That I was borne, and make me freſh and gay;
And but thou do to my norice honour,
And to my chamberere within my bour,
And to my faders folk and myn allies:
Thus ſayſt thou, olde barel ful of lies.
And yet alſo of our prentis Jankin,
For his criſpe here, ſhining as gold ſo fin,
And for he ſquiereth me both up and doun,
Yet haſt thou caught a falſe ſuſpeccion:
I wol him nat, though thou were ded to-morwe.
But tell me this, Why hideſt thou with ſorwe
The keies of thy cheſt away fro me?
It is my good as well as thin parde.
What, weneſt thou make an idiot of our Dame?
Now by that Lord that cleped is Seint Jame,
Thou ſhalt nat bothe, though that thou were wood,
Be maiſter of my body and of my good;
That on thou ſhalt forgo maugre thin eyen.
What helpeth it of me to enquere and ſpien?
I trow thou woldeſt locke me in thy cheſte.
Thou ſhuldeſt ſay, Fayr wif, go where thee leſte;
Take your diſport; I wol nat leve no tales;
I know you for a trewe wif, Dame Ales.
We love no man that taketh kepe or charge
Wher that we gon; we wol be at our large.
Of alle men yblefſed mote he be
The wiſe aſtrologien Dan Ptholomee,
That ſayth this proverbe in his Almageſte,
Of alle men his wiſdom is higheſte
That rekketh not who hath the world in hond.
By this proverbe thou ſhalt wel underſtond,
Have thou ynough, what thar thee rekke or care
How merily that other folkes fare?
For certes, olde dotard, by your leve,
Ye ſhullen have queint right ynough at eve.

He is to gret a nigard that wol werne
A man to light a candel at his lanterne;
He shal have never the lesse light parde:
Have thou ynough thee thar not plainen thee.
Thou sayst also if that we make us gay
With clothing and with precious aray,
That it is peril of our chastitee:
And yet with sorwe thou enforcest thee,
And sayst thise wordes in the apostles name;
In habit made with chastitee and shame
Ye women shul appareile you, (quod he)
And nat in tresfed here and gay perrie,
As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche.
After thy text ne after thy rubriche
I wol not work as mochel as a gnat.
Thou sayst also I walke out like a cat;
For who so wolde senge the cattes skin
Than wol the cat wel dwellen in hire in;
And if the cattes skin be sleke and gay,
She wol nat dwellen in hous half a day,
But forth she wol, or any day be dawed,
To shew hire skin and gon a caterwawed.
This is to say, if I be gay, sire shrewe,
I wol renne out my borel for to shewe.
Sire olde fool, what helpeth thee to spien?
Though thou pray Argus with his hundred eyen
To be my wardecorps, as he can best,
In faith he shal not kepe me but me lest:
Yet coude I make his berd, so mote I the.
Thou sayest eke that ther ben thinges three,
Which thinges gretly troublen all this erthe,
And that no wight ne may endure the serthe:
O lefe sire shrewe, Jesu short thy lif.
Yet precheste thou, an sayst, an hateful wif
Yrekened is for on of thise mischances.
Be ther non other maner resemblances
That ye may liken your parables to
But if a sely wif be on of tho?
Thou likeneste eke womans love to helle,
To barrein lond ther water may not dwelle.
Thou likeneste it also to wilde fire;
The mor it brenneth, the more it hath desire
To consume every thing that brent would be.
Thou sayeste right as wormes shende a tre
Right so a wif destroieth hire husbond;
This knowen they that ben to wives bond.
Lordings, right thus, as ye han understond,
Bare I stifly min old husbondes on hond,
That thus they saiden in hir dronkenesse;
And all was false but as I toke witnesse
On Jankin, and upon my nece also.
O Lord! the peine I did hem and the wo,
Ful giltelefs, by Goddes swete pine,
For as an hors I coude bite and whine;
I coude plain, and I was in the gilt,
Or elles oftentime I had ben spilt.
Who so first cometh to the mill first grint;
I plained first, so was our werre ystint.
They were ful glad to excusen hem full blive
Of thing the which they never agilt hir live.
Of wenches wold I beren hem on hond
Whan that for sike unnethes might they stond,
Yet tikeled I his herte for that he
Wend that I had of him so gret chiertee:
I swore that all my walking out by night
Was for to espien wenches that he dight:
Under that colour had I many a mirth;
For all swiche wit is yeven us in our birth;
Deceite, weping, spinning, God hath yeven
To women kindly while that they may liven.
And thus of o thing I may avaunten me,
At th' ende I had the beter in eche degree,
By sleight or force, or by som maner thing,
As by continual murmur or grutching,
Namely a-bed; ther hadden they meschance;
Ther wold I chide, and don hem no plesance:
I wold no lenger in the bed abide
If that I felt his arme over my side,
Till he had made his raunson unto me,
Than wold I soffre him do his nicetee:
And therfore every man this Tale I tell,
Winne who so may, for all is for to sell.
With empty hond men may no hankes lure;
For winning wold I all his lust endure,
And maken me a feined appetit,
And yet in bacon had I never delit,
That maked me that ever I wold him chide;
For though the Pope had sitten hem beside,
I wold not spare hem at hir owen bord,
For by my trouthe I quitte hem word for word.
As helpe me veray God omnipotent,
Tho I right now should make my testament,
I ne owe him not a word that it n'is quit;
I brought it so abouten by my wit
That they must yeve it up as for the best,
Or elles had we never been in rest;
For though he loked as a wood leon
Yet shuld he faille of his conclusion.
Than wold I say, Now, goode lefe, take kepe;
How mekely loketh Wilkin oure shepe!
Come ner my spouse, and let me ba thy cheke;
Ye shulden be al patient and meke,
And han a swete spiced conscience,
Sith ye so preche of Jobes patience.
Suffreth alway sin ye so wel can preche,
And but ye do, certain we shall you teche
That it is faire to han a wif in pees.
On of us two most bowen doutelees;
And sith a man is more resonable
Than woman is, ye mosten ben suffrable.
What aileth you to grutchen thus and grone?
Is it for ye wold have my queint alone?
Why take it all; lo, have it every del;
Peter, I shrew you but you love it wel:
For if I wolde sell my *belle chose*,
I coude walke as fresshe as is a rose,
But I wol kepe it for your owen toth.
Ye be to blame, by God I say you soth.
Swiche maner wordes hadden we on hond.
Now wol I speken of my of fourthe husbond.
My fourthe husbonde was a revellour,
This is to sayn, he had a paramour,
And I was yonge and ful of ragerie,
Stibborne and strong, and joly as a pie;
Though coude I dancen to an harpe smale,
And sing ywis as any nightingale,
When I had dronke a draught of swete wine.
Mettellius, the foul cherle, the swine,

That with a ſtaf beraft his wif hire lif
For ſhe drank wine, though I had been his wif
Ne ſhuld he not have daunted me fro drinke;
And after wine of Venus moſt I thinke;
For al ſo ſiker as cold engendreth hayl
A likerous mouth moſt han a likerous tayl.
In woman vinolent is no defence,
This knowen lechours by experience.
But, Lord Criſt! whan that it remembreth me
Upon my youth, and on my jolitee,
It tikeleth me about myn herte rote:
Unto this day it doth myn herte bote,
That I have had my world as in my time.
But age, alas! that all wol envenime,
Hath me beraft my beautee and my pith;
Let go, farewel, the devil go therwith!
The flour is gon, ther n'is no more to tell;
The bren as I beſt may now moſte I ſell.
But yet to be right mery wol I fond,
Now forth to tellen of my fourthe huſbond.
I ſay I had in herte gret deſpit
That he of any other had delit:
But he was quit by God and by Seint Joce:
I made him of the ſame wood a croce,
Not of my body in no foule manere,
But certainly I made folk ſwiche chere,
That in his owen greſe I made him frie,
For anger and for veray jalouſie.
By God, in erth I was his Purgatorie,
For which I hope his ſoule be in glorie:
For, God it wote, he ſate ful oft and ſonge
Whan that his ſho ful bitterly him wronge:
Ther was no wight, ſave God and he, that wiſte
In many a wiſe how ſore that I him twiſte.
He died whan I came fro Jeruſalem,
And lith ygrave under the rode-beem;
All is his tombe not ſo curious
As was the ſepulcre of him Darius,
Which that Appelles wrought ſo ſotelly:
It is but waſt to bury hem preciouſly.
Let him farewel, God give his ſoule reſt,
He is now in his grave and in his cheſt.
Now of my fifthe huſbonde wol I telle:
God let his ſoule never come in helle:
And yet was he to me the moſte ſhrew;
That fele I on my ribbes all by rew,
And ever ſhal unto min ending day:
But in our bed he was ſo freſh and gay,
And therwithall he coude ſo well me gloſe,
Whan that he wolde han my *belle chose*,
That though he had be bet on every bon
He coude win agen my love anon.
I trow I loved him the bet, for he
Was of his love ſo dangerous to me.
We wimmen han, if that I ſhal not lie,
In this matere a queinte fantaſie.
Waite, what thing we may nat lightly have,
Therafter wol we cry all day and crave.
Forbede us thing and that deſiren we;
Preſe on us faſt and thanne wol we flee.
With danger uttren we all our chaffare;
Gret prees at market maketh dere ware,
And to gret chepe is holden at litel priſe;
This knoweth every woman that is wiſe.

My fifthe huſbonde, God his ſoule bleſſe,
Which that I toke for love and no richeſſe,
He ſomtime was a clerk of Oxenforde,
And had left ſcole, and went at home at borde
With my goſſib, dwelling in oure toun,
God have hire ſoule! hire name was Aliſoun.
She knew my herte and all my privetee
Bet than our pariſh preeſt, ſo mote I the:
To hire bewried I my counſeil all,
For had my huſbond piſſed on a wall,
Or don a thing that ſhuld have coſt his lif,
To hire, and to another worthy wif,
And to my nece, which that I loved wel,
I wold have told his counſeil every del:
And ſo I did ful often, God it wote,
That made his face full often red and hote
For veray ſhame, and blamed himſelf, for he
Had told to me ſo gret a privatee.
And ſo befell that ones in a Lent
(So often times I to my goſſib went,
For ever yet I loved to be gay,
And for to walke in March, April, and May,
From hous to hous, to heren ſundry tales)
That Jankin clerk, and my goſſib Dame Alce,
And I myſelf, into the feldes went.
Myn huſbond was at London all that Lent:
I had the better leiſer for to pleie,
And for to ſee, and eke for to be ſeie
Of luſty folk. What wiſt I wher my grace
Was ſhapen for to be, or in what place?
Therfore made I my viſitations
To vigilies and to proceſſions,
To prechings eke, and to thiſe pilgrimages,
To playes of miracles, and mariages,
And wered upon my gay ſkarlet gites.
Thiſe wormes, ne thiſe mothes, ne thiſe mites,
Upon my paraille frett hem never a del;
And woſt thou why? for they were uſed wel.
Now wol I tellen forth what happed me.
I ſay that in the feldes walked we
Till trewely we had ſwiche daliance,
This clerk and I, that of my purveance
I ſpake to him, and ſaid him how that he,
If I were widewe, ſhulde wedden me.
For certainly, I ſay for no bobance,
Yet was I never without purveance
Of mariage, ne of other thinges eke:
I hold a mouſes wit not worth a leke
That hath but on hole for to ſterten to,
And if that faille, than is all ydo.
I bare him on hond he had enchanted me,
(My dame taughte me that ſubtiltee)
And eke I ſayd I mette of him all night,
He wold han ſlain me as I lay upright,
And all my bed was ful of veray blood;
But yet I hope that ye ſhuln do me good,
For blood betokeneth gold, as me was taught,
And al was falſe, I dreamed of him right naught,
But as I folwed ay my dames lore,
As wel of that as of other thinges more.
But now, Sire, let me ſee, what ſhall I ſain?
A ha! by God I have my Tale again.
Whan that my fourthe huſbonde was on bere,
I wept algate and made a ſory chere,

As wives moten, for it is the uſage,
And with my coverchefe covered my viſage;
But for that I was purveyed of a make,
I wept but ſmal, and that I undertake.
To chirche was myn huſbond born a-morwe
With neigheboures that for him maden forowe,
And Jankin oure clerk was on of tho:
As helpe me God, whan that I ſaw him go
After the bere, me thought he had a paire
Of legges and of feet ſo clene and faire
That all my herte I yave unto his hold.
He was, I trow, a twenty winter old,
And I was fourty, if I ſhal ſay ſoth,
But yet I had alway a coltes toth.
Gat-tothed I was, and that became me wele;
I had the print of Seint Venus ſele.
As helpe me God, I was a luſty on,
And faire, and riche, and yonge, and wel begon;
And trewely, as min huſbondes tolden me,
I had the beſte queint that mighte be,
For certes I am all Venerian
In ſeling, and my herte is Martian:
Venus me yave my luſt and likerouſneſſe,
And Mars yave me my ſturdy hardineſſe.
Min aſcendent was Taure, and Mars therinne:
Alas, alas! that ever love was ſinne!
I folwed ay min inclination
By vertue of my conſtellation;
That made me that I coude nat withdraw
My chambre of Venus from a good felaw;
Yet have I Martes merke upon my face,
And alſo in another privee place:
For God ſo wiſly be my ſalvation,
I loved never by no diſcretion,
But ever folwed min appetit,
All were he ſhorte, longe, blacke, or white:
I toke no kepe, ſo that he liked me,
How poure he was, ne eke of what degree.
What ſhulde I ſay? but at the monthes ende
This joly clerk Jankin, that was ſo hende,
Hath wedded me with gret ſolempnitee,
And to him yave I all the lond and fee
That ever was me yeven therbefore,
But afterward repented me ful ſore.
He n'olde ſuffre nothing of my liſt:
By God he ſmote me ones with his fiſt,
For that I rent out of his book a leſe,
That of the ſtroke myn ere wex all deſe.
Stibborne I was as is a leoneſſe,
And of my tonge a veray janglereſſe;
And walke I wold, as I had don beforn,
Fro hous to hous, although he had it ſworn,
For which he oftentimes wold preche,
And me of olde Romaine geſtes teche.
How he Sulpitius Gallus left his wif,
And hire forſoke for terme of all his lif,
Not but for open-heded he hire ſay
Loking out at his dore upon a day.
Another Romaine told he me by name,
That for his wif was at a ſommer game
Without his weting he forſoke hire eke.
And than wold he upon his Bible ſeke
That ilke proverbe of Eccleſiaſte,
Wher he commandeth, and forbedeth faſte,
Man ſhal not ſuffer his wif go roule aboute.
Than wold he ſay right thus withouten doute,
Who ſo that bildeth his hous all of ſalwes,
And priketh his blind hors over the falwes,
And ſuffereth his wif to go ſeken halwes,
Is worthy to be honged on the galwes.
But all for nought; I fette not an hawe
Of his proverbes ne of his olde ſawe;
Ne I wold not of him corrected be.
I hate hem that my vices tellen me,
And ſo do mo of us (God wote) than I.
This made him wood with me all utterly;
I n'olde not forbere him in no cas.
Now wol I ſay you ſoth, by Seint Thomas,
Why that I rent out of his book a leſe,
For which he ſmote me ſo that I was deſe.
He had a book that gladly night and day
For his diſport he wolde it rede alway;
He cleped it Valerie and Theophraſt,
And with that book he lough away ful faſt.
And eke ther was a clerk ſomtime at Rome,
A cardinal, that highte Seint Jerome,
That made a book again Jovinian,
Which book was ther, and eke Tertullian,
Criſippus, Trotula, and Helowis,
That was abbeſſe not fer fro Paris,
And eke the Paraboles of Salomon,
Ovides Art, and bourdes many on;
And alle thiſe were bonden in o volume.
And every night and day was his cuſtume
(Whan he had leiſer and vacation
From other worldly occupation)
To reden in this book of wikked wives:
He knew of hem mo legendes and mo lives
Than ben of goode wives in the Bible.
For truſteth wel it is an impoſſible
That any clerk wol ſpeken good of wives,
(But if it be of holy ſeintes lives)
Ne of non other woman never the mo.
Who peinted the leon, telleth me who?
By God if wimmen hadden written ſtories,
As clerkes han, within hir oratories,
They wold have writ of men more wikkedneſſe
Than all the merke of Adam may redreſſe.
The children of Mercury and of Venus
Ben in hir werking ful contrarious.
Mercury loveth wiſdom and ſcience,
And Venus loveth riot and diſpence;
And for hir divers diſpoſition
Eche falleth in others exaltation:
As thus; God wote Mercury is deſolat
In Piſces, wher Venus is exaltat,
And Venus falleth wher Mercury is reiſed,
Therfore no woman of no clerk is preiſed.
The clerk whan he is old, and may naught do
Of Venus werkes not worth his old ſho,
Than ſiteth he doun and writeth in his dotage
That wimmen cannot kepe hir mariage.
But now to purpos why I tolde thee
That I was beten for a book parde.
Upon a night Jankin, that was our ſire,
Red on his book as he ſate by the fire,
Of Eva firſt, that for hire wickedneſſe,
Was all mankinde brought to wretchedneſſe

For which that Jesu Crist himself was slain,
That bought us with his herte blood again.
Lo here expresse of wimmen may ye find
That woman was the losse of all mankind.
Tho redde he me how Sampson lost his heres,
Sleping his lemman kitte hem with hire sheres,
Thurgh whiche treson lost he both his eyen,
Tho redde he me, if that I shall not lien,
Of Hercules, and of his Deianire,
That caused him to set himself a-fire.
Nothing forgat he the care and the wo
That Socrates had with his wives two;
How Xantippa cast pisse upon his hed.
This sely man sat still as he were ded;
He wiped his hed; no more dorst he sain
But, Er the thonder stint ther cometh rain.
Of Pasiphae, that was the Quene of Crete,
For shrewednesse him thought the tale swete.
Fie! speke no more (it is a grisely thing)
Of hire horrible lust and hire liking.
Of Clitemnestra, for hire lecherie
That falsely made hire husbond for to die,
He redde it with ful good devotion.
He told me eke for what occasion
Amphiorax at Thebes lost his lif:
My husbond had a legend of his wif
Eriphile, that for an ouche of gold
Hath prively unto the Grekes told
Wher that hire husbond hidde him in a place,
For which he had at Thebes sory grace.
Of Lima told he me, and of Lucie;
They bothe mad: hir husbondes for to die,
That on for love, that other was for hate.
Lima hir husbond on an even late
Empoysoned hath, for that she was his so:
Lucia likerous loved hire husbond so,
That for he should alway upon hire thinke,
She yave him swiche a maner love-drinke,
That he was ded er it were by the morwe:
And thus algates husbondes hadden sorwe.
Than told he me how one Latumeus
Complained to his felaw Arius,
That in his gardin growed swiche a tree,
On which he said how that his wives three
Honged hemself for hertes despitous.
O leve brother! quod this Arius,
Yeve me a plant of thilke blessed tree,
And in my gardin planted shal it be.
Of later date, of wives hath he redde,
That som han slain hir husbondes in hir bedde,
And let hir lechour dight hem all the night,
While that the corps lay in the flore upright;
And som han driven nailes in hir brain,
While that they slepe, and thus they han hem slain;
Som han hem yeven poyson in hir drink.
He spake more harm than herte may bethinke.
And therwithall he knew of mo proverbes
Than in this world ther growen gras or herbes.
Bet is (quod he) thin habitation
Be with a leon or a foule dragon
Than with a woman using for to chide.
Bet is (quod he) high in the roof abide
Than with an angry woman doun in the hous,
They ben so wikked and contrarious:
They haten that hir husbondes loven ay.
He sayd a woman cast hire shame away
Whan she cast of hire smock; and forther mo,
A faire woman, but she be chast also,
Is like a gold ring in a sowes nose.
Who coude wene or who coude suppose
The wo that in min herte was and the pine?
And whan I saw he n'olde never fine
To reden on this cursed book all night,
Al sodenly three leves have I plight
Out of his book, right as he redde, and eke
I with my fist so toke him on the cheke
That in oure fire he fell backward adoun;
And he up sterte as doth a wood leoun,
And with his fist he smote me on the hed,
That in the flore I lay as I were ded.
And whan he saw how stille that I lay
He was agast, and wold have fled away,
Til at the last out of my swough I brayde.
O! hast thou slain me, false thief? I sayde,
And for my lond thus hast thou mordred me?
Er I be ded yet wol I kissen thee.
And nere he came, and kneled faire adoun,
And sayde, Dere suster Alisoun!
As helpe me God I shal thee never smite:
That I have don it is thyself to wite;
Foryeve it me, and that I thee beseke.
And yet eftsones I hitte him on the cheke,
And sayde, Theef, thus much am I awreke.
Now wol I die, I may no longer speke.
But at the last, with mochel care and wo,
We fell accorded by ourselven two.
He yaf me all the bridel in min hond
To han the governance of hous and lond,
And of his tonge and of his hond also,
And made him brenne his book anon right tho.
And whan that I had getten unto me
By maistrie all the soverainetee,
And that he sayd, Min owen trewe wif,
Do as thee list the terme of all thy lif;
Kepe thin honour, and kepe eke min estat;
After that day we never had debat.
God helpe me so, I was to him as kinde
As any wif fro Denmark unto Inde,
And al so trewe, and so was he to me:
I pray to God that sit in majestee
So blisse his soule, for his mercy dere.
Now wol I say my Tale if ye wol here.
The Frere lough whan he had herd all this:
Now, Dame, quod he, so have I joye and blis,
This is a long preamble of a Tale.
And whan the Sompnour herd the Frere gale,
Lo (quod this Sompnour) Goddes armes two,
A Frere wol entermete him evermo:
Lo, goode men, a flie and eke a Frere
Wol fall in every dish and eke matere.
What spekest thou of preambulatioun?
What? amble or trot, or pees, or go sit doun:
Thou letteste our disport in this matere.
Ye, wolt thou so, Sire Sompnour? quod the Frere;
Now by my faith I shal, er that I go,
Tell of a Sompnour swiche a Tale or two,
That all the folk shal laughen in this place.
Now elles, Frere, I will beshrewe thy face,

(Quod this Sompnour) and I beſhrewe me
But if I telle Tales two or three
Of Freres, or I come to Sidenborne,
That I ſhal make thin herte for to morne,
For wel I wot thy patience is gone.
Our Hoſte cried, Pees, and that anon;
And ſayde, Let the woman tell hire Tale;
Ye fare as folk that dronken ben of ale.
Do, Dame, tell forth your Tale, and that is beſt.
Al redy, Sire, quod ſhe, right as you leſt,
If I have licence of this worthy Frere.
Yes, Dame, quod he, tell forth, and I wol here.

THE WIF OF BATHES TALE *.

In olde dayes of the King Artour,
Of which that Bretons ſpeken gret honour,
All was this lond fulfilled of Faerie;
The Elf quene with hire joly compagnie
Danced ful oft in many a grene mede,
This was the old opinion as I rede;
I ſpeke of many hundred yeres ago,
But now can no man ſee non elves mo;
For now the grete charitee and prayeres
Of limitoures and other holy freres,
That ſerchen every land and every ſtreme,
As thikke as motes in the ſonne beme,
Bliſſing halles, chambres, kichens, and boures,
Citees and burghes, caſtles highe and toures,
Thropes and bernes, ſhepenes and daires,
This maketh that therben no Faeries:
For ther as wont to waken was an elf,
Ther walketh now the limatour himſelf
In undermeles and in morweninges,
And ſayth his matines and his holy thinges
As he goth in his limitatioun.
Women may now go ſafely up and doun,
In every buſh, and under every tree,
Ther is non other Incubes but he,
And he ne will don hem no diſhonour.
An ſo befell it that this King Artour
Had in his hous a luſty bacheler,
That on a day came riding fro river:
And happed that, alone as ſhe was borne,
He ſaw a maiden walking him beforne,
Of which maid he anon, maugre hire hed,
By veray force beraft hire maidenhed:
For which oppreſſion was ſwiche clamour,
And ſwiche purſuite unto the King Artour,
That damned was this knight for to be ded,
By cours of lawe, and ſhuld have loſt his hed,
(Paraventure ſwiche was the ſtatute tho)
But that the quene and other ladies mo
So longe praieden the king of grace,
Til he his lif him granted in the place,
And yaf him to the quene, all at hire will
To chefe whether ſhe wold him ſave or ſpill.
The quene thanketh the king with all hire might;
And after this thus ſpake ſhe to the knight,
Whan that ſhe ſaw hire time upon a day.
Thou ſtandeſt yet (quod ſhe) in ſwiche array,
That of thy lif yet haſt thou not ſeuretee;
I grant thee lif if thou canſt tellen me
What thing is it that women moſt deſiren:
Beware, and keppe thy nekke bone from yren.
And if thou canſt not tell it me anon,
Yet wol I yeve thee leve for to gon
A twelvemonth and a day to ſeke and lere
And anſwer ſuffiſant in this matere;
And ſeuretee wol I have, or that thou pace,
Thy body for to yelden in this place.
Wo was the knight, and ſorwefully he ſiketh:
But what? he may not don all as him liketh.
And at the laſt he chefe him for to wende,
And come agen right at the yeres ende
With ſwiche anſwer as God wold him purvay,
And taketh his leve, and wendeth for his way.
He ſeketh every hous and every place.
Wher as he hopeth for to finden grace,
To lernen what thing women loven moſte;
But hene coude ariven in no coſte
Wher as he mighte find in this matere
Two creatures according in fere.
Som ſaiden women loven beſt richeſſe,
Som ſaiden honour, ſom ſaiden jolineſſe,
Som riche array, ſom ſaiden luſt a-bedde,
And oft time to be widewe and to be wedde.
Some ſaiden that we ben in herte moſt eſed
Whan that we ben yflatered and ypreiſed.
He goth ful nigh the ſoth, I wol not lie;
A man ſhal winne us beſt with flaterie;
And with attendance and with beſineſſe
Ben we ylimed bothe more and leſſe.
And ſom men ſaiden that we loven beſt.
For to be free, and do right as us leſt,

* A batchelor of King Arthur's court is enjoined by the Queen, upon pain of death, to tell what thing it is that women do moſt deſire. At length he is taught it by an old woman, whom he is enforced to marry. *Urry*,

And that no man repreve us of our vice,
But ſay that we ben wiſe and nothing nice:
For trewely ther n'is non of us all,
If any wight wol claw us on the gall,
That we n'ill kike for that he ſaith us ſoth;
Aſſay, and he ſhal find it that ſo doth:
For be we never ſo vicious withinne
We wol be holden wiſe and clene of ſinne.
And ſom ſaiden that gret delit han we
For to be holden ſtable and eke ſecre,
And in o purpos ſtedfaſtly to dwell,
And not bewreyen thing that men us tell;
Bot that tale is not worth a rake-ſtele.
Parde we women connen nothing hele,
Witneſſe on Mida; wol ye here the Tale?
Ovide, amonges other thinges ſmale,
Said Mida had under his longe heres
Growing upon his hed two aſſes eres,
The whiche vice he hid, as he beſte might,
Ful ſubtilly from every mannes ſight,
That ſave his wif ther wiſt of it no mo;
He loved hire moſt, and truſted hire alſo;
He praied hire that to no creature
She n'olde tellen of his diſfigure.
She ſwore him Ney, for all the world to winne
She nolde do that vilanie ne ſinne,
To make hire huſbond han ſo foule a name:
She n'olde not tell it for hire owen ſhame.
But natheles hire thoughte that ſhe dide
That ſhe ſo longe ſhuld a conſeil hide;
Hire thought it ſwal ſo ſore about hire herte,
That nedely ſom word hire muſt aſterte;
And ſith ſhe dorſt nat telle it to no man,
Doun to a mareis faſte by ſhe ran;
Til ſhe came ther hire herte was a-fire:
And as a bitore bumbleth in the mire,
She laid hire mouth unto the water doun.
Bewrey me not, thou water, with thy ſoun,
Quod ſhe; to thee I tell it, and no mo,
Min huſbond hath long aſſes eres two.
Now is min herte all hole, now is it out,
I might no lenger kepe it out of dout.
Here may ye ſee, though we a time abide,
Yet out it moſte; we can no conſeil hide.
The remenant of the Tale, if ye wol here,
Redeth Ovide, and ther ye may it lere.
This knight, of which my Tale is ſpecially,
Whan that he ſaw he might not come therby,
(This is to ſayn, what women loven moſt)
Within his breſt ful ſorweful was his goſt.
But home he goth, he mighte not ſojourne;
The day was come that homward muſt he turne.
And in his way it happed him to ride,
In all his care, under a foreſt ſide,
Wheras he ſaw upon a dance go
Of ladies foure-and-twenty, and yet mo.
Toward this ilke dance he drow ful yerne,
In hop that he ſom wiſdom ſhulde lerne;
But certainly er he came fully there
Yvaniſhed was this dance he n'iſte not wher;
No creature ſaw he that bare lif,
Save on the grene he ſaw ſitting a wif,
A fouler wight ther may no man deviſe.
Againe this knight this olde wif gan ariſe,
And ſaide Sire Knight, here forth ne lith no way.
Tell me what that ye ſeken by your fay,
Paraventure it may the better be:
Thiſe olde folk con mochel thing, quod ſhe.
My leve mother, quod this knight, certain
I n'am but ded but if that I can ſain
What thing it is that women moſt deſire:
Coude ye me wiſſe I wold quite wel your hire.
Plight me thy trouthe here in myn hond, quod ſhe,
The nexte thing that I requere of thee
Thou ſhalt it do, if it be in thy might,
And I wol tell it you or it be night.
Have here my trouthe, quod the knight, I graunte.
Thanne, quod ſhe, I dare me wel avaunte
Thy lif is ſauf, for I wol ſtond therby,
Upon my lif the quene wol ſay as I.
Let ſee which is the proudeſt of hem alle,
That wereth on a kerchef or a calle,
That dare ſayn nay of that I ſhal you teche.
Let us go forth withouten lenger ſpeche.
Tho rowned ſhe a piſtel in his ere,
And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.
Whan they ben comen to the court, this knight
Said he had hold his day as he had hight,
And redy was his anſwere, as he ſaide.
Ful many a noble wif, and many a maide,
And many a widewe, for that they ben wiſe,
(The quene hireſelf ſitting as a juſtice),
Aſſembled ben his anſwer for to here,
And afterward this knight was bode appere.
To every wight commanded was ſilence,
And that the knight ſhuld tell in audience
What thing that worldly women loven beſt.
This knight ne ſtood not ſtill as doth a beſt,
But to this queſtion anon anſwerd
With manly voie, that all the court it herd.
My liege Lady, generally, quod he,
Women deſiren to han ſoveraintee,
As well over hir huſbond as hir love,
And for to ben in maiſtrie him above.
This your moſt deſire, though ye me kille;
Doth as you liſt, I am here at your wille.
In all the court ne was ther wif ne maide,
Ne widewe, that contraried that he ſaide,
But ſaid he was worthy to han his lif.
And with that word up ſtert this olde wif
Which that the knight ſaw ſitting on the grene.
Mercy, quod ſhe, my ſoveraine lady Quene,
Er that your court depart, as doth me right.
I taughte this anſwere unto this knight,
For which he plighte me his trouthe there,
The firſte thing I wold of him requere,
He wold it do, if it lay in his might.
Before this court than pray I thee, Sire, Knight,
Quod ſhe, that thou me take unto thy wif.
For wel thou woſt that I have kept thy lif:
If I ſay falſe, ſay nay upon thy fay.
This knight anſwered, Alas and wala wa!
I wot right wel that ſwiche was my beheſt.
For Goddes love as cheſe a new requeſt:
Take all my good, and let my body go.
Nay than, quod ſhe, I ſhrewe us bothe two:

For though that I be olde, foule, and pore,
I n'elde for all the metal ne the ore
That under erthe is grave, or lith above,
But if thy wif I were and eke thy love.
My love! quod he; nay, my dampnation.
Alas! that any of my nation
Shuld ever so foule disparaged be.
But all for nought; the end is this, that he
Constrained was he nedes must hire wed,
And taketh this olde wif, and goth to bed.
Now wolden som men sayn paraventure,
That for my negligence I do no cure
To tellen you the joye and all the array
That at the feste was that ilke day.
To which thing shortly answeren I shal:
I say ther was no joye ne feste at al;
Ther n'as but hevinesse and mochel sorwe;
For prively he wedded hire on the morwe,
And all day after hid him as an oule,
So wo was him his wif loked so foule.
Gret was the wo the knight had in his thought
Whan he was with his wif a-bed ybrought;
He walweth, and he turneth to and fro.
This olde wif lay smiling evermo,
And said, O dere husbond, *benedicite*!
Fareth ever knight thus with wif as ye?
Is this the lawe of King Artoures hous?
Is every knight of his thus dangerous?
I am your owen love, and eke your wif,
I am she which that saved hath your lif,
And certes yet did I you never unright;
Why fare ye thus with me this firste night?
Ye faren like a man had lost his wit.
What is my gilt? for Goddes love tell it,
And it shal ben amended if I may.
Amended! quod this knight, alas! nay, nay,
It wol not ben amended never mo;
Thou art so lothly, and so olde also,
And therto comen of so low a kind,
That littel wonder is though I walwe and wind;
So wolde God min herte wolde brest.
Is this, quod she, the cause of your unrest?
Ye certainly, quod he, no wonder is.
Now Sire, quod she, I coude amend all this,
If that me list, er it were dayes three,
So wel ye mighten bere you unto me.
But for ye speken of swiche gentillesse
As is descended out of old richesse;
That therefore shullen ye be gentilmen;
Swiche arrogance n'is not worth an hen.
Loke who that is most vertuous alway,
Prive and apert, and most entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he can,
And take him for the greteste gentilman.
Crist wol we claime of him our gentillesse,
Not of our elders for hir old richesse;
For though they yeve us all hir heritage,
For which we claime to ben of high parage,
Yet may they not bequethen for no thing
To non of us hir vertuous living,
That made hem gentilmen called to be,
And bade us folwen hem in swiche degree
Wel can the wise poet of Florence,
That highte Dant, speken of this sentence:
Lo in swiche maner rime is Dantes tale.
Ful selde up riseth by his branches smale
Prowesse of man, for God of his goodnesse
Wol that we claime of him our gentillesse;
For of our elders may we nothing claime
But temporel thing, that man may hurt and maime.
Eke every wight wot this as wel as I,
If gentillesse were planted naturelly
Unto a certain linage doun the line,
Prive and apert, than wold they never fine
To don of gentillesse the faire office;
They mighten do no vilanie or vice.
Take fire, and bere it into the derkest hous
Betwix this and the Mount of Cacasus,
And let men shette the doers, and go thenne,
Yet wol the fire as faire lie and brenne
As twenty thousand men might it behold;
His office naturel ay wol it hold,
Up peril of my lif, til that it die.
Here may ye see wel how that genterie
Is not annexed to possession,
Sith folk ne don hir operation
Alway, as doth the fire, lo, in his kind:
For God it wot men moun ful often find
A lordes sone do shame and vilanie.
And he that wol han pris of his genterie,
For he was boren of a gentil hous,
And had his elders noble and vertuous,
And n'ill himselven do no gentil dedes,
Ne folwe his gentil auncestrie that ded is,
He n'is not gentil, be he duk or erl,
For vilains sinful dedes make a cherl:
For gentillesse n'is but the renomee
Of thin auncestres for hir high bountee,
Which is a strange thing to thy persone:
Thy gentillesse cometh fro God alone;
Than cometh our veray gentillesse of grace;
It was no thing bequethed us with our place.
Thinketh how noble, as saith Valerius,
Was thilke Tullius Hostilius,
That out of poverte rose to high noblesse.
Redeth Senek, and redeth eke Boece,
Ther shull ye seen expresse that it no dred is
That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis:
And therefore, leve husbond, I thus conclude,
Al be it that min auncestres weren rude,
Yet may the highe God, and so hope I,
Granten me grace to liven vertuously;
Than am I gentil whan that I beginne
To liven vertuously and weiven sinne.
And ther as ye of poverte me repreve,
The highe God, on whom that we beleve,
In wilful poverte chese to lede his lif;
And certes every man, maiden, or wif,
May understond that Jesus heven king
Ne wold not chese a vicious living.
Glad poverte is an honest thing certain,
This wol Senek and other clerkes sain.
Who so that halt him paid of his poverte,
I hold him rich, al had he not a sherte.
He that coveiteth is a poure wight,
For he wold han that is not in his might;
But he that nought hath, ne coveiteth to have,
Is riche, although ye hold him but a knave.

Veray poverte is ſinne proprely.
Juvenal ſaith of poverte merily,
The poure man whan he goth by the way,
Beforn the theves he may ſing and play.
Poverte is hateful good; and, as I geſſe,
A ful gret bringer out of beſineſſe;
A gret amender eke of ſapience
To him that taketh it in patience.
Poverte is this, although it ſome elenge,
Poſſeſſion that no wight wol challenge.
Poverte ful often, whan a man is low,
Maketh his God and eke himſelf to know.
Poverte a ſpectakel is, as thinketh me,
Thurgh which he may his veray frendes ſee.
And therefore, Sire, ſin that I you not greve,
Of my poverte no more me repreve.
Now, Sire, of elde that ye repreven me:
And certes, Sire, though non auctoritee
Were in no book, ye gentiles of honour
Sain that men ſhuld an olde wight honour,
And clepe him Fader, for your gentilleſſe;
And auctours ſhal I finden, as I geſſe.
Now ther ye ſain that I am foule and old,
Than drede ye not to ben a cokewold;
For filthe, and elde alſo, ſo mote I the,
Ben grete wardeins upon chaſtitee.
But natheles, ſin I know your delit,
I ſhal fulfill your wordly appetit.
Cheſe now (quod ſhe) on of thiſe thinges twey,
To han me foule and old til that I dey,
And be to you a trewe humble wif,
And never you diſpleſe in all my lif;
Or elles wol ye han me yonge and faire,
And take your aventure of the repaire
That ſhal be to your hous becauſe of me,
Or in ſom other place it may wel be?
Now cheſe yourſelven whether that you liketh.
This knight aviſeth him, and ſore ſiketh,
But at the laſt he ſaid in this manere:
My lady and my love, and wif ſo dere,
I put me in your wiſe governance,
Cheſeth yourſelf which may be moſt pleſance
And moſt honour to you and me alſo,
I do no force the whether of the two,
For as you liketh it ſufficeth me.
Than have I got the maiſtere, quod ſhe,
Sin I may cheſe and governe as me leſt.
Ye certes, wif, quod he, I hold it beſt.
Kiſſe me, quod ſhe, we be no lenger wrothe,
For by my trouth I wol be to you bothe,
This to ſayn, ye bothe faire and good.
I pray to God that I mote ſterven wood
But I to you be al ſo good and trewe
As ever was wif ſin that the world was newe,
And but I be to-morwe as faire to ſeen
As any lady, emperice, or quene,
That is betwix the eſt and eke the weſt,
Doth with my lif and deth right as you leſt.
Caſt up the curtein, loke how that it is.
And whan the knight ſaw verailly all this,
That ſhe ſo faire was, and ſo yonge therto,
For joye he hent hire in his armes two:
His herte bathed in a bath of bliſſe,
A thouſand time a-row he gan hire kiſſe:
And ſhe obeyed him in every thing
That mighte don him pleſance or liking.
And thus they live unto hir lives ende
In parfit joye; and Jeſu Criſt us ſende
Huſbondes meke and yonge, and freſh a-bed,
And grace to overlive hem that we wed.
And eke I pray Jeſus to ſhort hir lives
That wol not be governed by hir wives;
And old and angry nigards of diſpence
God ſend hem ſone a veray peſtilence.

THE FRERES PROLOGUE.

THIS worthy limitour, this noble Frere,
He made alway a maner louring chere
Upon the Sompnour, but for honeſtee
No vilains word as yet to him ſpake he;
But at the laſt he ſaid unto the Wif,
Dame, (quod he) God yeve you right good lif,
Ye have here touched, all ſo mote I the,
In ſcole matere a ful gret difficultie;
Ye han ſaid mochel thing right wel I ſay:
But, Dame, here as we riden by the way
Us nedeth not to ſpeken but of game,
And let auctoritees, in Goddes name,
To preching and to ſcole eke of clergie.
But if it like unto this compagnie
I wol you of a Sompnour tell a game;
Parde ye may wel knowen by the name
That of a Sompnour may no good be ſaid;
I pray that non of you be evil apaid:
A Sompnour is a renner up and doun
With mandements for fornicatioun,
And is ybets at every tounes ende.
Tho ſpake our Hoſte, A, Sire, ye ſhuld hende
And curteis, as a man of your eſtat,
In compagnie we wiln have no debat:
Telleth your Tale, and let the Sompnour be.
Nay, quod the Sompnour, let him ſay by me
What ſo him liſt; whan it cometh to my lot,
By God I ſhal him quiten every grot;
I ſhal him tellen which a gret honour
It is to be a flatering limitour,
And eke of many another maner crime,
Which nedeth not reherſen at this time,
And his office I ſhal him tell ywis.
Our Hoſte anſwered, Pees, no more of this.
And afterward he ſaid unto the Frere
Tel forth your Tale min owen maiſter dere.

THE FRERES TALE†.

WHILOM ther was dwelling in my contree
An archedeken, a man of high degree,
That boldely did execution
In puniſhing of fornication,
Of witchecraft, and eke of bauderie,
Of defamation, and avouterie,
Of chirche-reves, and of teſtaments,
Of contracts, and of lack of ſacraments,
Of uſure, and of ſimonie alſo,
But certes lechours did he greteſt wo;
They ſhulden ſingen if that they were hent,
And ſmale titheres weren foule yſhent;
If any perſone wold upon hem plaine
Ther might aſtert hem no pecunial peine.
For ſmale tithes and ſmale offering
He made the peple pitouſly to ſing,
For er the biſhop hent hem with his crook
They weren in the archedekens book;
Than had he thurgh his juriſdiction
Power to don on hem correction.
He had a Sompnour redy to his hond,
A ſlier boy was non in Englelond;
For ſubtilly he had his eſpiaille,
That taught him wel wher it might ought availle
He coude ſpare of lechours on or two
To techen hem to foure-and-twenty mo:
For though this Sompnour wood be as an hare,
To tell his harlotrie I wol not ſpare,

† A Sompnour and the devil meeting on the way, after conference become ſworn brethren, and to hell they go together. A covert invective againſt the bribery and corruption of the ſpiritual courts in thoſe days. *Urry.*

For we ben out of hir correction,
They han of us no jurisdiction,
Ne never shul have, terme of all hir lives.
Peter, so ben the women of the stives,
Quod this Sompnour, yput out of our cure?
Pees, with mischance and with misaventure,
Our Hoste said, and let him tell his Tale.
Now telleth forth, and let the Sompnour gale,
Ne spaireth not, min owen maister dere.
This false theef, this Sompnour, quod the Frere,
Had alway baudes redy to his hond,
As any hauke to lure in Englelond,
That told him all the secree that they knewe,
For hir acquaintance was not come of newe;
They weren his approvers prively:
He tooke himself a gret profit therby,
His maister knew not alway what he wan.
Withouten mandement a lewed man
He coude sompne up peine of Cristes curse,
And they were inly glad to fille his purse,
And maken him gret festes at the nale.
And right as Judas hadde purses smale,
And was a theef, right swiche a theef was he;
His maister hadde but half his duetee.
He was (if I shal yeven him his laud)
A theef, and eke a Sompnour, and a baud.
He had eke wenches at his retenue,
That whether that Sire Robert or Sire Hue,
Or Jakke or Rauf, or who so that it were
That lay by hem, they told it in his ere.
Thus was the wenche and he of on assent;
And he wold fecche a feined mandement,
And sompne hem to the chapitre bothe two,
And pill the man and let the wenche go:
Than wold he say, Frend, I shal for thy sake
Do strike thee out of oure lettres blake;
Thee thar no more as in this cas travaille;
I am thy frend ther I may thee availle.
Certain he knew of briboures many mo
Than possible is to tell in yeres two;
For in this world n'is dogge for the bowe
That can an hurt dere from an hole yknowe
Bet than this Sompnour knew a slie lechour,
Or an avoutrer or a paramour;
And for that was the fruit of all his rent,
Therfore on it he set all his entent,
And so befell that ones on a day
This Sompnour, waiting ever on his praye,
Rode forth to sompne a widewe, an old ribibe,
Feining a cause, for he wold han a bribe;
And happed that he saw beforn him ride
A gay yeman under a foreste side;
A bow he bare, and arwes bright and kene,
He had upon a courtepy of grene.
An hat upon his hed with frenges blake.
Sire, quod the Sompnour, haile, and wel atake.
Welcome, quod he, and every good felaw.
Whider rideste thou under this grene shaw?
(Saide this yeman) wolt thou fer to-day?
This Sompnour him answerd, and saide Nay.
Here faste by (quod he) is min entent
To riden, for to reisen up a rent
That longeth to my lordes duetee.
A! art thou than a baillif? Ye, quod he.
(He dorste not for veray filth and shame
Say that he was a Sompnour, for the name.)
De par dieux, quod this yeman, leve brother,
Thou art a baillif, and I am another.
I am unknowen as in this contree;
Of thin acquaintance I wol prayen thee,
And eke of brotherhed, if that thee list.
I have gold and silver lying in my chist;
If that thee hap to come in to our shire
Al shal be thin right as thou wolt desire.
Grand mercy, quod this Sompnour, by my faith.
Everich in others hond his trouthe laith
For to be fworne brethren til they dey.
In daliaunce they riden forth and pley.
This Sompnour, which that was as ful of jangles
As ful of venime ben thise wariangles,
And ever enquering upon every thing,
Brother, quod he, wher is now your dwelling,
Another day if that I shuld you seche?
This yeman him answerd in soste speche,
Brother, quod he, fer in the north contree,
Wher as I hope sometime I shall thee see.
Or we depart I shal thee so wel wisse,
That of min hous ne shalt thou never misse.
Now brother, quod this Sompnour, I you pray
Teche me, while that we riden by the way,
(Sith that ye ben a baillif as am I)
Som subtiltee, and tell me faithfully
In min office how I may moste winne;
And spareth not for conscience or for sinne,
But as my brother tell me how do ye.
Now by my trouthe, brother min, said he,
As I shal tellen thee a faithful Tale.
My wages ben ful streit and eke ful smale;
My lord is hard to me and dangerous,
And min office is ful laborious,
And therfore by extortion I leve;
Forsoth I take all that men wol me yeve:
Algates by sleighte or by violence
Fro yere to yere I win all my dispence:
I can no better tellen faithfully.
Now certes (quod this Sompnour) so fare I;
I spare not to taken, God it wote,
But if it be to hevy or to hote.
What I may gete in conseil prively
No maner conscience of that have I.
N'ere min extortion I might not liven,
Ne of swiche japes wol I not be shriven.
Stomak ne conscience know I non;
I shrew thise shrifte faders everich on:
Wel be we met by God and by Seint Jame.
But, leve brother, tell me than thy name,
Quod this Sompnour. Right in this mene while
This yeman gan a litel for to smile.
Brother, quod he, wolt thou that I thee tell?
I am a fend, my dwelling is in hell,
And here I ride about my pourchasing
To wote wher men wol give me any thing:
My pourchas is th' effect of all my rent,
Loke how thou rideste for the same entent:
To winnen good thou rekest never how:
Right so fare I, for riden wol I now
Unto the worldes ende for a praye.
A, quod this Sompnour, *benedicite!* what say ye?

I wend ye were a yeman trewely,
Ye have a mannes ſhape as wel as I:
Have ye then a figure determinat
In helle, ther ye ben in your eſtat?
Nay certainly, quod he, ther have we non,
But whan us liketh we can take us on,
Or elles make you wene that we ben ſhape
Somtime like a man, or like an ape,
Or like an angel can I ride or go;
It is no wonder thing though it be ſo;
A louſy jogelour can deceiven thee,
And parde yet can I more craft than he.
Why, quod the Sompnour, ride ye than or gon
In ſondry ſhape, and not alwey in on?
For we, quod he, wol us ſwiche forme make
As moſt is able our preye for to take.
What maketh you to han al this labour?
Ful many a cauſe, leve Sire Sompnour,
Saide this fend. But alle thing hath time;
The day is ſhort, and it is paſſed prime,
And yet ne wan I nothing in this day;
I wol entend to winning if I may,
And not entend our thinges to declare;
For, brother min, thy wit is al to bare
To underſtand, although I told hem thee.
But for thou axeſt why labouren we?
For ſomtime we be Goddes inſtruments,
And menes to don his commandements,
Whan that him liſt, upon his creatures,
In divers actes and in divers figures:
Withouten him we have no might certain,
If that him liſt to ſtonden theragain.
And ſomtime at our praiere han we leve
Only the body and not the ſoul to greve;
Witneſſe on Job, whom that we diden wo,
And ſomtime han we might on bothe two,
This is to ſain, on ſoule and body eke:
And ſomtime be we ſuffered for to ſeke
Upon a man, and don his ſoule unreſte
And not his body, and all is for the beſte.
Whan he withſtandeth our temptation
It is a cauſe of his ſalvation,
Al be it that it was not our entente
He ſhuld be ſauf, but that we wold him hente.
And ſomtime be we ſervants unto man,
As to the Archebiſhop Seint Dunſtan,
And to the apoſtle ſervant eke was I.
Yet tell me, quod this Sompnour, faithfully,
Make ye you newe bodies this alway
Of elements? The fend anſwered Nay.
Somtime we ſeine, and ſomtime we ariſe
With ded bodies, in ful ſondry wiſe,
And ſpeke as renably, and faire, and wel,
As to the Phitoneſſe did Samuel;
And yet wol ſom men ſay it was not he:
I do no force of your divinitee.
But o thing warne I thee, I wol not jape,
Thou wolt algates wete how we be ſhape:
Thou ſhalt hereafterward, my brother dere,
Come wher thee nedeth not of me to lere,
For thou ſhalt by thin owen experience
Conne in a chaiere rede of this ſentence
Bet than Virgile, while he was on live,
Or Dant alſo. Now let us riden blive,
For I wol holden compagnie with thee
Til it be ſo that thou forſake me.
Nay, quod this Sompnour, that ſhal never betide.
I am yeman knowen is ful wide;
My trouthe wol I hold, as in this cas;
For though thou were the devil Sathanas
My trouthe wol I hold to thee, my brother,
As I have ſworne, and eche of us to other,
For to be trewe brethren in this cas,
And bothe we gon abouten our pourchas.
Take thou thy part, what that men wol thee yeve,
And I ſhal min, thus may we both leve;
And if that any of us have more than other
Let him be trewe, and part it with his brother.
I graunte, quod the devil, by my fay;
And with that word they riden forth her way,
And right at entring of the tounes ende
To which this Sompnour ſhope him for to wende,
They ſaw a cart that charged was with hay,
Which that a carter drove forth on his way.
Depe was the way, for which the carte ſtood;
The carter ſmote, and cried as he were wood,
Heit Scot, heit Brok; what, ſpare ye for the ſtones?
The fend (quod he) you fecche body and bones,
As ferforthly as ever ye were foled,
So mochel wo as I have with you tholed.
The devil have al, bothe hors, and cart, and hay.
The Sompnour ſayde, Here ſhal we have a praye;
And nere the fend he drow, as nought ne were,
Ful prively, and rouned in his ere,
Herken my brother, herken, by thy faith;
Hereſt thou not how that the carter ſaith?
Hent it anon, for he nath yeve it thee,
Both hay and cart, and eke his caples three.
Nay, quod the devil, God wot never a del!
It is not his entente, truſt thou me wel:
Axe him thyſelf, if thou not troweſt me,
Or elles ſtint a while and thou ſhalt ſee.
This carter thakketh his hors upon the croupe,
And they begonne to drawen and to ſtoupe.
Heit now, quod he; ther, Jeſu Criſt you bleſſe,
And all his hondes werk bothe more and leſſe!
That was wel twight, min owen Liard boy,
I pray God ſave thy body and Seint Eloy.
Now is my cart out of the ſlough parde.
Lo, brother, quod the fend, what told I thee?
Here may ye ſeen, min owen dere brother,
The cherl ſpake o thing but he thought another.
Let us go forth abouten our viage;
Here win I nothing upon this cariage.
Whan that they comen ſomwhat out of toun
This Sompnour to his brother gan to roune;
Brother, quod he, here woneth an old rebekke
That had almoſt as lefe to leſe hire nekke
As for to yeve a peny of hire good.
I wol have twelf pens though that ſhe be wood,
Or I wol ſomone hire to our office,
And yet, God wot, of hire know I no vice;
But for thou canſt not as in this contree
Winnen thy coſt, take here enſample of me.
This Sompnour clappeth at the widewes gate;
Come out, he ſayd, thou olde very trate;
I trow thou, haſt ſom frere or preeſt with thee.
Who clappeth? ſaid this wif, *benedicite!*

God ſave you; Sire, what is your ſwete will?
I have, quod he, of ſomons here a bill:
Up peine of curſing loke that thou be
To-morwe before the archedekenes knee,
To anſwere to the court of certain thinges.
Now Lord, quod ſhe, Chriſt Jeſu, King of kinges,
So wiſely helpe me as I ne may:
I have been ſike, and that full many a day:
I may not go ſo fer (quod ſhe) ne ride
But I be ded, ſo priketh it in my ſide.
May I not axe a libel, Sire Sompnour,
And anſwere ther by my procuratour
To ſwiche thing as men wold appoſen me?
Yes, quod this Sompnour, pay anon; let ſee;
Twelf pens to me, and I will thee acquite:
I ſhall no profit han therby but lite;
My maiſter hath the profit and not I.
Come of, and let me riden haſtily;
Yeve me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarie.
Twelf pens! quod ſhe; now Lady Seint Marie
So wiſly helpe me out of care and ſinne,
This wide world though that I ſhuld it winne,
Ne have I not twelf pens within my hold,
Ye knowen wel that I am poure and old;
Kithe your almeſſe upon me poure wretche.
Nay then, quod he, the ſoule fend me fetche
If I thee excuſe, though thou ſhuldeſt be ſpilt.
Alas! quod ſhe, God wot I have no guilt.
Pay me, quod he, or by the ſwete Seinte Anne
As I wol bere away thy newe panne
For dette which thou oweſt me of old,
Whan that thou madeſt thyn huſbond cokewold,
I paied at home for thy correction.
Thou lieſt, quod ſhe, by my ſalvation;
Ne was I never or now, widew ne wif,
Sompned unto your court in all my lif,
Ne never I n'as but of my body trewe.
Unto the devil rough and blake of hewe
Yeve I thy body and my panne alſo.
And whan the devil herd hire curſen ſo
Upon hire knees he ſayd in this manere;
Now Mabily, min moder dere,
Is this your will in earneſt that ye ſay?
The devil, quod ſhe, ſo fetche him or he dey,
And panne and all, but he wol him repent.
Nay, olde ſtot, that is not min entent,
Quod this Sompnour, for to repenten me
For any thing that I have had of thee:
I wold I had thy ſmok and every cloth.
Now brother, quod the devil, be not wroth;
Thy body and this panne ben min by right:
Thou ſhalt with me to helle yet to-night,
Wher thou ſhalt known of our priveteé
More than a maiſter of divinitee.
And with that word the foule fend him hent
Body and ſoule: he with the devil went
Wher as thiſe Sompnours han her heritage:
And God, that maked after his image
Mankinde, ſave and gide us all and ſome,
And lene this Sompnour good man to become.
Lordings, I coude have told you (quod this Frere)
Had I had leiſer for this Sompnour here,
After the text of Criſt, and Poule, and John,
And of oure other doctours many on,
Swiche peines that your hertes might agriſe,
Al be it ſo that no tonge may deviſe,
Though that I might a thouſand winter tell,
The peines of thilke curſed hous of hell:
But for to kepe us fro that curſed place
Waketh and prayeth Jeſu of his grace
So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas.
Herkneth this word, beware as in this cas;
The leon ſit in his awaite alway
To ſle the innocent if that he may.
Diſpoſeth aye your hertes to withſtond
The fend, that you wold maken thral and bond:
He may not tempten you over your might,
For Criſt wol be your champion and your knight;
And prayeth that this Sompnour him repent
Of his miſdedes, or that the fend him hent.

THE SOMPNOURES PROLOGUE.

This Sompnour in his ſtirops high he ſtood;
Upon this Frere his hearte was ſo wood,
That like an aſpen leef he quoke for ire.
Lordings, quod he, but o thing I deſire;
I you beſeche that of your curteſie,
Sin ye han herd this falſe Frere lie,
As ſuffereth me I may my tale telle.
This Frere boſteth that he knoweth helle,
And God it wot that is but litel wonder;
Freres and fendes ben but litel aſonder.
For parde ye han often time herd telle
How that a frere raviſhed was to helle
In ſpirit ones by a viſioun,
And as an angel lad him up and doun,
To ſhewen him the paines that ther were,
In all the place ſaw he not a frere:
Of other folk he ſaw ynow in wo.
Unto this angel ſpake the frere tho;
Now Sire, quod he, han freres ſwich a grace,
That non of hem ſhall comen in this place?
Yes, quod this angel, many a millioun;
And unto Sathanas he lad him doun.
(And now hath Sathanas, ſaith he, a tayl
Broder than of a carrike is the ſayl)
Hold up thy tayl, thou Sathanas, quod he,
Shew forth thin ers, and let the frere ſee
Wher is the neſt of freres in this place.
And ere than half a furlong way of ſpace,
Right ſo as bees out ſwarmen of an hive,
Out of the devils ers ther gonnen drive
A twenty thouſand freres on a route.
And thurghout hell they ſwarmed al aboute,
And com agen, as faſt as they may gon,
And in his ers they crepen everich on:
He clapt his tayl again, and lay ful ſtill.
This frere, whan he loked, had his fill
Upon this turments of this ſory place;
His ſpirit God reſtored of his grace
Into his body agen, and he awoke;
But nathleſs for fere yet he quoke,
So was the devils ers ay in his mind,
That is his heretage of veray kind.
God ſave you alle ſave this curſed Frere;
My Prologue wol I end in this manere.

THE SOMPNOURES TALE*.

Lordings, there is in Yorkſhire, as I geſſe,
A merſh contree ycalled Holderneſſe,
In which ther went a limitour aboute,
To preach and eke to beg it is no doubte.
And ſo befell that on a day this frere
Had preached at a chirche in his manere,
And ſpecially aboven every thing
Excited he the peple in his preching
To trentals, and to yeve, for Goddes ſake,
Wherwith men mighten holy houſes make,
Ther as divine ſervice is honoured,
Not ther as it is waſted and devoured,

* A begging friar coming to a farmer's houſe who lay ſick, obtaineth of the ſick man a certain legacy which muſt be equally divided among his convent. A requital to the friar, ſhewing their cozenage, loitering, impudent begging, and hypocritical preying.

Ne ther it nedeth not for to be yeven,
As to poſſeſſioners, that mowen leven
(Thanked be God) in wele end abundance.
Trentalt, ſayd he, deliveren fro penance
Hir frendes ſoules as well old as yonge,
Ye, whan that they ben haſtily yſonge,
Not for to hold a preeſt jolif and gay,
He ſingeth not but o maſſe on a day.
Delivereth out (quod he) anon the ſoules.
Ful hard it is with fleſhhook or with oules
To ben yclawed, or to bren or bake.
Now ſpede you haſtily for Criſtes ſake.
And whan this frere had ſaid all his entent,
With *qui cum patri* forth his way he went.
Whan folk in chirche had yeve him what hem leſt
He went his way, no lenger wold he reſt.
With ſcrippe and tipped ſtaf, ytucked hie,
In every hous he gan to pore and prie,
And begged mele and cheſe, or elles corn.
His ſelaw had a ſtaf tipped with horn,
A pair of tables all of ivory,
And a pointel ypoliſhed fetiſly,
And wrote alway the names, as he ſtood,
Of alle folk that yave hem any good,
Aſkaunce that he woulde for hem preye.
Yeve us a buſhel whete, or malt or reye,
A Goddes kichel, or a trippe of cheſe,
Or elles what you liſt, we may not cheſe;
A Goddes halfpenny, or a maſſe peny,
Or yeve us of your braun, if ye have any,
A dagon of your blanket, leve Dame,
Our ſuſter dere, (lo, here I write your name)
Bacon or beef, or ſwiche thing as ye find.
A ſturdy harlot went hem ay behind,
That was her hoſtes man, and bare a ſakke;
And what men yave hem laid it on his bakke.
And whan that he was out at dore, anon
He planed away the names everich on
That he before had written in his tables;
He ſerved hem with niſles and with fables.
Nay ther thou lieſt, thou Sompnour, quod the Frere.
Pees, quod our Hoſte, for Criſtes moder dere
Tell forth thy Tale, and ſpare it not at all.
So thrive I, quod this Sompnour, ſo I ſhall.
So long he went fro hous to hous til he
Came to an hous ther he was wont to be
Refreſhed more than in a hundred places.
Sike lay the huſbond man whos that the place is;
Bedred upon a couche low he lay.
Deus hic, quod he; O Thomas! frend, good day,
Sayde this frere all curtiſly and ſoft.
Thomas, quod he, God yelde it you, ful oft
Have I upon this benche faren ful wele,
Here have I eten many a mery mele.
And fro the benche he drove away the cat,
And laied adoun his potent and his hat,
And eke his ſcrip, and ſet himſelf adoun:
His ſelaw was ywalked into toun,
Forth with his knave, into that hoſtelrie
Wher as he ſhope him thilke night to lie.
O dere maiſter! quod this ſilke man,
How have ye faren ſin that March began?
I ſaw you not this fourtene night and more:
God wot, quod he, laboured have I full ſore,
And ſpecially for thy ſalvation
Have I ſayd many a precious oriſon,
And for our other frendes God hem bleſſe.
I have this day ben at your chirche at meſſe,
And ſaid a ſermon to my ſimple wit,
Not all after the text of holy writ;
For it is hard to you as I ſuppoſe,
And therefore wol I teche you ay the gloſe.
Gloſing is a ful glorious thing certain,
For letter ſleth, ſo as we clerkes ſain;
There have I taught hem to be charitable,
And ſpend hir good ther it is reaſonable;
And ther I ſaw our dame; a! wher is ſhe?
Yonder, I trow that in the yard ſhe be,
Sayde this man, and ſhe wol come anon.
Ey maiſter, welcome be ye by Seint John,
Sayde this wif; how fare ye hertily?
This frere ariſeth up ful curtiſly;
And hire embraceth in her armes narwe,
And kiſſeth hire ſwete, and chirketh as a ſparwe
With his lippes. Dame, quod he, right wel,
As he that is your ſervant every del.
Thanked be God that you yaf ſoule and lif
Yet ſaw I not this day ſo faire a wif
In all the chirche, God to ſave me.
Ye God amende defautes, Sire, quod ſhe,
Algates welcome be ye, by my fay.
Grand mercy, Dame, that have I found alway.
But of your grete goodneſſe; be your leve,
I wolde pray you that ye not you greve,
I wol with Thomas ſpeke a litel throw;
Thiſe curates ben ſo negligent and low
To gropen tenderly a conſcience.
In ſhrift, in preching, is my diligence
And ſtudy, in Peters wordes and in Poules;
I walke and fiſhe Criſten mennes ſoules,
To yield our Lord Jeſu his propre rent;
To ſpred his word is ſet all mine entent.
Now by your faith, o dere Sire! quod ſhe,
Chideth him wel for Seinte Charitee:
He is ay angry as is a piſſemire,
Though that he have all that he can deſire:
Though I him wrie a-night, and make him warm,
And over him lay my leg and eke mine arm,
He groneth as our bore lith in our ſtie:
Other diſport of him right non have I;
I may not pleaſe him in no maner cas.
O Thomas, *jeo vous die*, Thomas, Thomas!
This maketh the fend, this muſte ben amended.
Ire is a thing that high God hath defended,
And therof wol I ſpeke a word or two.
Now maiſter, quod the wif, er that I go,
What wol ye dine? I wol go theraboute.
Now Dame, quod he, *jeo vous die ſinz doute*,
Have I not of a capon but the liver,
And of your white bred nat but a ſhiver,
And after that a roſted pigges hed,
(But I ne wolde for me no beeſt were ded)
Than had I with you homly ſuffiſance;
I am a man of little ſuſtenance;
My ſpirit hath his feſtring in the Bible;
My body is ay ſo ready and ſo penible

To waken, that my ſtomak is deſtroied.
I pray you, Dame, that ye be nought annoied,
Though I ſo frendly you my conſeil ſhewe;
By God I n'old have told it but a fewe.
Now Sire, quod ſhe, but o word er I go.
My child is ded within theſe wekes two,
Sone after that ye went out of this toun.
His deth ſaw I by revelatioun,
Sayde this frere, at home in our dortour.
I dare wel ſain that er than half an hour
After his deth I ſaw him borne to bliſſe
In mine aviſion, ſo God me wiſſe;
So did our ſextein and our fermerere,
That han ben trewe freres fifty yere*;
They may now, God be thanked of his lone,
Maken hir jubilee, and walke alone.
And up I aroſe, and all our covent eke,
With many a tere trilling on our cheke,
Withouten noiſe, or clattering of belles,
Te deum was our ſong, and nothing elles,
Save that to Criſt I bade an oriſon,
Thanking him of my revelation.
For, Sire and Dame, truſteth me right wel
Our oriſons ben more effectuel,
And more we ſeen of Criſtes ſecret thinges,
Than boſel folk, although that they be kinges.
We live in poverte and in abſtinence,
And boral folk in richeſſe and diſpence
Of mete and drinke, and in her foule delit:
We han this worldes luſt all in deſpit.
Lazar and Dives lividen diverſely,
And divers guerdon hadden they therby.
Who ſo wol pray, he muſt faſt and be clene,
And fat his ſoule and make his body lene.
We fare as ſayth the apoſtle; cloth and food
Sufficeth us, though they be not ful good.
The cleneneſſe and the faſting of us freres
Maketh that Criſt accepteth our praieres.
Lo, Moiſes forty daies and forty night
Faſted er that the high God ful of might
Spake with him in the mountagne of Sinay:
With empty wombe of faſting many a day
Received he the lawe that was writen
With Goddes finger; and Eli, wel ye witen,
In Mount Oreb, er he had any ſpeche
With highe God, that is our lives leche,
He faſted long, and was in contemplance.
Aaron, that had the temple in governance,
And eke the other preeſtes everich on,
Into the temple whan they ſhulden gon
To praien for the peple, and do ſerviſe,
They n'olden drinken in no maner wiſe
No drinke which that might hem dronken make,
But ther in abſtinence pray and wake
Leſt that they deiden. Take heed what I ſay—
But they be ſobre that for the peple pray—
Ware that I ſay—No more; for it ſufficeth.
Our Lord Jeſu, as holy writ deviſeth,
Yave us enſample of faſting and praieres;
Therfore we mendiants, we ſely freres,
Ben wedded to poverte and continence,
To charitee, humbleſſe, and abſtinence,
To perſecution for rightwiſneſſe,
To weping, miſericorde, and to cleneneſſe;
And therfore may ye ſee that our praieres
(I ſpeke of us, we mendiants, we freres)
Ben to the highe God more acceptable
Than youres, with your feſtes at your table.
Fro Paradis firſt, if I ſhal not lie,
Was man outchaſed for his glotonie;
And chaſt was man in Paradis certain.
But herken now, Thomas, what I ſhal ſain:
I have no text of it as I ſuppoſe,
But I ſhal find it in a maner gloſe;
That ſpecially our ſwete Lord Jeſus
Spake this by freres whan he ſayde thus,
Bleſſed be they that poure in ſpirit ben;
And ſo forth all the goſpel may ye ſen,
Whether it be liker our profeſſion
Or hirs that ſwimmen in poſſeſſion.
Fie on hir pompe, and on hir glotonie,
And on hir lewedneſſe! I hem defie.
Me thinketh they ben like Jovinian,
Fat as a whale, and walken as a ſwan;
Al vinolent as botel in the ſpence;
Hir praier is of ful gret reverence:
Whan they for ſoules ſay the Pſalm of Davit,
Lo, buf they ſay, *Cor meum eructavit*.
Who foloweth Criſtes goſpel and his lore
But we, that humble ben, and chaſt and pore,
Workers of Goddes word, not auditors?
Therfore right as an hauke upon a ſours
Up ſpringeth into the aire, right ſo praires
Of charitable and chaſt beſy freres
Maken hir ſours to Goddes eres two.
Thomas, Thomas! ſo mote I ride or go,
And by that lord that cleped is Seint Ive,
N'ere thou our broder ſhuldeſt thou not thrive.
In our chapitre pray we day and night
To Criſt, that he thee ſende hele and might
Thy body for to welden haſtily.
God wot, quod he, nothing thereof fel I.
As help me Criſt, as I in fewe yeres
Have ſpended upon divers maner freres
Ful many a pound, yet fare I never the bet;
Certain my good have I almoſt beſet:
Farewel my good, for it is al ago.
The frere anſwered, O Thomas, doſt thou ſo?
What nedeth you diverſe freres to feche?
What nedeth him that hath a parfit leche
To ſechen other leches in the toun?
Your inconſtance is your confuſion.
Hold ye than me, or elles our covent,
To pray for you ben inſufficient?
Thomas, that jape n'is not worth a mite;
Your maladie is for we han to lite.
A! yeve that covent half a quarter otes,
And yeve that covent four-and-twenty groteſ,
And yeve that frere a peny and let him go:
Nay, nay, Thomas, it may no thing be ſo.
What is a ferthing worth parted on twelve?
Lo, eche thing that is oned in himſelve
Is more ſtrong than whan it is yſcatered.
Thomas, of me thou ſhalt not be yflatered,

* See *Du Cange*, in v. *Sempectae*. Peculiar honours and immunities were granted by the rule of St. Benedict to thoſe monks "qui quinquaginta annos in ordine exegerant, "quos annum jubilæum exegiſſe vulgo dicimus." It is probable that ſome ſimilar regulation obtained in the other orders.

Thou woldeſt han our labour al for nought,
The highe God, that all this world hath wrought,
Saith that the workman worthy is his hire.
Thomas, nought of your treſor I deſire
As for myſelf, but that all our covent
To pray for you is ay ſo diligent,
And for to bilden Criſtes owen chirche.
Thomas, if ye wol lernen for to wirche,
Of bilding up of chirches may ye finde
If it be good in Thomas lif of Inde.
Ye liggen here ful of anger and of ire,
With which the devil ſet your herte on fire,
And chiden here this holy innocent,
Your wif, that is ſo good and patient;
And therfore trow me, Thomas, if thee leſt,
Ne ſtrive not with thy wif, as for the beſt.
And bere this word away now by thy faith,
Touching ſwiche thing, lo, what the wiſe ſaith:
Within thy hous ne be thou no leon,
To thy ſuggets do non oppreſſion,
Ne make thou not thin acquaintance to flee.
And yet, Thomas, eftſones charge I thee,
Beware from ire that in thy boſom ſlepeth;
Ware fro the ſerpent that ſo ſlily crepeth
Under the gras, and ſtingeth ſubtilly:
Beware, my ſone, and herken patiently,
That twenty thouſand men han loſt hir lives
For ſtriving with hir lemmans and her wives.
Now ſith ye han ſo holy and meek a wif,
What nedeth you, Thomas, to maken ſtrif?
Ther n'is ywis no ſerpent ſo cruel,
Whan man tredeth on his tail, ne half ſo fel,
As woman is whan ſhe hath caught an ire;
Veray vengeance is than all hire deſire.
Ire is a ſinne on of the grete ſeven,
Abhominable unto the God of heven,
And to himſelf it is deſtruction:
This every lewed vicar and perſon
Can ſay how ire engendreth homicide:
Ire is in ſoth executour of pride.
I coud of ire ſay ſo mochel ſorwe
My Tale ſhulde laſten til to-morwe;
And therfore pray I God both day and night
An irous man God ſend him litel might.
It is gret harm, and certes gret pitee,
To ſette an irous man in high degree.
Whilom ther was an irous poteſtat,
As ſaith Senek, that during his eſtat
Upon a day outriden knightes two;
And, as Fortune wold that it were ſo,
That on of hem came home, that other nought.
Anon the knight before the judge is brought,
That ſaide thus; Thou haſt thy felaw ſlain,
For which I deme thee to the deth certain.
And to another knight commanded he,
Go, lede him to the deth, I charge thee.
And happed as they wenten by the wey
Toward the place ther as he ſhulde dey,
The knight came which men wenden had be ded:
Than thoughten they it was the beſte rede
To lede hem both to the juge again.
They ſaiden, Lord, the knight ne hath not ſlain
His felaw, here he ſtondeth hol alive.
Ye ſhull be ded, quod he, ſo mot I thrive,
That is to ſay, both on, and two, and three.
And to the firſte knight right thus ſpake he.
I damned thee, thou muſt algate be ded;
And thou alſo muſt nedes leſe thyn hed,
For thou art cauſe why thy felaw deyeth;
And to the thridde knight right thus he ſeyeth,
Thou haſt not don that I commanded thee.
And thus he did do ſlen hem alle three.
Irous Cambiſes was eke dronkelew,
And ay delighted him to ben a ſhrew:
And ſo befell a lord of his meinie,
That loved vertuous moralitee,
Sayd on a day betwix hem two right thus;
A lord is loſt if he be vicious;
And dronkenneſſe is eke a foule record
Of any man, and namely of a lord.
Ther is ful many an eye and many an ere
Awaiting on a lord, and he n'ot wher.
For Goddes love drink more attemprely:
Win maketh man to leſen wretchedly
His mind, and eke his limmes everich on.
The revers ſhalt thou ſee, quod he, anon,
And preve it by thyn owen experience
Than win ne doth to folk no ſwiche offence.
Ther is no win bereveth me my might
Of hond, ne foot, ne of myn eyen ſight.
And for deſpit he dranke mochel more
An hundred part than he had don before,
And right anon this curſed irous wretche
This knightes ſone let before him fetche,
Commanding him he ſhuld before him ſtond;
And ſodenly he took his bow in hond,
And up the ſtring he pulled to his ere,
And with an arwe he ſlow the child right ther.
Now whether have I a ſiker hond or non?
Quod he; is al my might and mind agon?
Hath win bereved me min eyen ſight?
What ſhuld I tell the anſwer of the knight?
His ſon was ſlain, ther is no more to ſay.
Beth ware therfore with lordes for to play,
Singeth Placebo, and I ſhal if I can,
But if it be unto a poure man:
To a poure man men ſhuld his vices telle,
But not to a lord, though he ſhuld go to helle.
Lo, irous Cirus, thilke Perſien,
How he deſtroyed the river of Giſen,
For that an hors of his was dreint therin,
Whan that he wente Babilon to win:
He made that the river was ſo ſmal,
That wimmen might it waden over al.
Lo, what ſaid he, that ſo wel techen can?
Ne be no felaw to non irous man,
Ne with no wood man walke by the way,
Leſt thee repent; I wol no forther ſay.
Now Thomas, leve brother, leve thin ire,
Thou ſhalt me find as juſt as is a ſquire:
Hold not the devils knif ay to thin herte,
Thin anger doth thee all to ſore ſmerte;
But ſhew to me all thy confeſſion.
Nay, quod the ſick man, by Seint Simon
I have ben ſhriven this day of my curat;
I have him told al holly min eſtat.
Nedeth no mo to ſpeke of it, ſayth he,
But if me liſt of min humilitee.

Yeve me than of thy gold to make our cloiſtre,
Quod he, for many a muſcle and many an oiſtre,
Whan other men han ben ful wel at eſe,
Hath ben our food, our cloiſtre for to reſe;
And yet, God wot, unneth the fundament
Parfourmed is, ne of our pavement
N'is not a tile yet within our wones;
By God we owen fourty pound for ſtones.
Now help, Thomas, for him that harwed helle,
For elles mote we our bokes ſelle,
And if ye lack our predication,
Than goth this world all to deſtruction;
For who ſo fro this world wold us bereve,
So God me ſave, Thomas, by your leve
He wold bereve out of this world the ſonne;
For who can teche and wo:ken as we conne?
And that is not of litel time (quod he)
But ſithen Elie was and Eliſee
Han freres ben, that find I of record,
In charitee, ythonked be our Lord.
Now Thomas, help for Seinte Charitee.
And doun anon he ſette him on his knee.
This ſike man woxe wel neigh wood for ire;
He wolde that the frere had ben a-fire
With his falſe diſſimulation.
Swiche thing as is in my poſſeſſion,
Quod he, that may I yeve you, and non other.
Ye ſain me thus, how that I am your brother.
Ye certes, quod this frere, ye truſteth wel;
I took our dame the letter of our ſele.
Now wel, quod he, and ſomwhat ſhal I yeve
Unto your holy covent while I live;
And in thin hond thou ſhalt it have anon,
On this condition, and other non,
That thou depart it ſo, my dere brother,
That every frere have as moche as other:
This ſhalt thou ſwere on thy profeſſion
Withouten fraud or cavilation.
I ſwere it, quod the frere, upon my faith;
And therwithal his hond in his he layth.
Lo here my faith; in me ſhal be no lak.
Than put thin hond adoun right by my bak,
Saide this man, and grope wel behind
Benethe my buttok, ther thou ſhalte find
A thing that I have hid in privetee.
A! thought this frere, that ſhal go with me;
And doun his hond he launcheth to the cliſte,
In hope for to finden ther a gifte.
And whan this ſike man felt this frere
About his towel gropen ther and here,
Amid his hond he let the frere a fart:
Ther n'is no capel drawing in a cart
That might han let a fart of ſwiche a ſoun.
The frere up ſterte as doth a wood leoun;
A! falſe cherl, quod he, for Goddes bones,
This haſt thou in deſpit don for the nones:
Thou ſhalt abie this fart if that I may.
His meinie, which that herden this affray,
Came leping in, and chaſed out the frere,
And forth he goth with a ful angry chere,
And ſet his ſclaw ther as lay his ſtore:
He lyed as it were a wilde bore,
And grinte with his teeth, ſo was he wroth.
A ſturdy pas doun to the court he goth,
Wher as ther woned a man of gret honour,
To whom that he was alway confeſſour:
This worthy man was lord of that village,
This frere came, as he were in a rage.
Wher as this lord ſat eting at his bord:
Unnethes might the frere ſpeke a word,
Til atte laſte he ſaide, God you ſee!
This lord gan loke, and ſaid, *Benedicite!*
What? Frere John, what maner world is this?
I ſee wel that ſom thing ther is amis;
Ye loken as the wood were ful of theves.
Sit doun anon, and tell me what your greve is,
And if ſhal ben amended if I may.
I have, quod he, had a deſpit to day,
God yelde you, adoun in your village,
That in this world ther n'is ſo poure a page,
That he n'olde have abhominatioun
Of that I have received in youre toun;
And yet ne greveth me nothing ſo ſore
As that the olde cherl with lokkes bore
Blaſphemed hath oure holy covent eke.
Now maſter, quod this lord, I you beſeke.
No maiſter, Sire, quod he, but ſervitour,
Though I have had in ſcele that honour.
God liketh not that man us Rabi call
Neither in market ne in your large hall.
No force, quod he, but tell me all your grefe.
Sire, quod this frere, an odious miſchefe
This day betid is to min ordre and me,
And ſo *per conſequens* to eche degree
Of holy chirche, God amende it ſone.
Sire, quod the lord, ye wot what is to don:
Diſtempre you not, ye ben my confeſſour;
Ye ben the ſalt of the erthe and the ſavour:
For Goddes love your patience now hold;
Telle me your greſe. And he anon him told
As ye han herd before, ye wot wel what.
The lady of the hous ay ſtille ſat
Til ſhe had herde what the frere ſeid.
Ey, Goddes moder, quod ſhe, bliſful maid!
Is ther ought elles? tell me faithfully.
Madame, quod he, how thinketh you therby?
How that me thinketh? quod ſhe; ſo God me ſpede,
I ſay a cherle had don a cherles dede.
What ſhuld I ſay? God let him never the;
His ſike hed is ful of vanitee:
I hold him in a maner freneſie.
Madame, quod he, by God I ſhal not lie,
But I in other wiſe may ber awreke;
I ſhal diffame him over all ther I ſpeke;
This falſe blaſphemour, that charged me
To parten that wol not departed be
To every man ylike, with meſchance.
The lord ſat ſtille as he were in a trance,
And in his herte he rolled up and doun
How had this cherl imaginatioun
To ſhewen ſwiche a probleme to the frere.
Never erſt or now ne herd I ſwiche matere;
I trow the devil put it in his mind.
In all arſmetrike ſhal ther no man find
Before this day of ſwiche a queſtion.
Who ſhulde make a demonſtration
That every man ſhuld han ylike his part
As of a ſoun or ſavour of a fart?

On ice proude cherl! I shrewe his face.
Lo, Sires, quod the lord, with harde grace,
Who ever herd of swiche a thing or now?
To every man ylike! tell me how.
It is an impossible, it may not be:
Ey, nice cherl! God let him never the.
The rombling of a sart, and every soun,
N'is but of aire reverberatioun,
And ever it wasteth lite and lite away;
Ther n'is no man can demen, by my say,
If that it were departed equally.
What? lo my cherl, lo yet how shrewedly
Unto my confessour to-day he spake!
I hold him certain a demoniake.
Now ete your mete, and let the cherl go play;
Let him go honge himself a devil way.
Now stood the lordes squier atte bord
That carf his mete, and herde word by word
Of all this thing of which I have you sayd.
My Lord, quod he, be ye not evil apaid;
I conde telle for a goune-cloth
To you, Sire Frere, so that ye be not wroth,
How that this sart shuld even ydeled be
Amonge your covent, if it liked thee.
Tell, quod the lord, and thou shalt have anon
A goune-cloth, by God and by Seint John.
My Lord, quod he, whan that the weder is
Withouten winde or pertourbing of aire, [faire,
Let bring a cart-whele here into this hall,
But loke that it have his spokes all;
Twelf spokes hath a cart-whele communly;
And bring me than twelf freres, wete ye why?
For threttene is a covent as I gesse:
Your confessour here for his worthinesse
Shal parfourme up the noumbre of his covent.
Than shull they knele adoun by on assent,
And to every spokes end in this manere
Ful sadly lay his nose shal a frere;
Your noble confessour, ther God him save,
Shal hold his nose upright under the nave,
Than shal this cherl, with bely stif and tought
As any tabour, hider ben ybrought;
And set him on the whele right of this cart
Upon the nave, and make him let a fart,
And ye shull seen, up peril of my lif,
By veray preef that is demonstratif,
That equally the soun of it wol wende,
And eke the stinke, unto the spokes ende,
Save that this worthy man, your confessour,
(Because he is a man of gret honour)
Shal han the firste fruit, as reson is.
The noble usage of freres yet it is
The worthy men of hem shul first be served,
And certainly he hath it wel deserved;
He hath to-day taught us so mochel good,
With preching in the pulpit ther he stood,
That I may vouchesaf, I say for me,
He hadde the firste smel of sartes three,
And so wold all his brethren hardely,
He bereth him so faire and holyly.
The lord, the lady, and eche man, save the
Sayden that Jankin spake in this matere [frere,
As wel as Euclide or elles Ptholomee.
Touching the cherl they saydan, Subtiltee
And highe wit made him speken as he spake;
He n'is no fool ne no demoniake.
And Jankin hath ywonne a new goune.
My Tale is don; we ben almost at toune,

THE CLERKES PROLOGUE.

Sire Clerk of Oxenforde, our Hoſte ſaid,
Ye ride as ſtille and coy as doth a maid
Were newe ſpouſed, ſitting at the bord;
This day ne herd I of your tonge a word.
I trow ye ſtudie abouten ſom ſophime;
But Salomon ſaith that every thing hath time.
For Goddes ſake as beth of better chere,
It is no time for to ſtudein here.
Tell us ſom mery Tale by your fay;
For what man that is entred in a play
He nedes moſt unto the play aſſent.
But precheth not, as freres don in Lent,
To make us for our olde ſinnes wepe,
Ne that thy Tale make us not to ſlepe.
Tell us ſom mery thing of aventures;
Your termes, your coloures, and your figures,
Kepe hem in ſtore til ſo be ye endite
Hie ſtile, as whan that men to kinges write.
Speketh ſo plain at this time, I you pray,
That we may underſtonden what ye ſay.
This worthy Clerk benignely anſwerde;
Hoſte, quod he, I am under your yerde,
Ye have of us now the governance,
And therefore wolde I do you obeyſance,
As fer as reſon aſketh hardely:
I wol you tell a Tale which that I
Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
As preved by his wordes and his werk:
He is now ded and nailed in his cheſte,
I pray to God ſo yeve his ſoule reſte.

Fraunceis Petrark, the Laureat poete,
Highte this clerk, whos rethorike ſwete
Enlumined all Italie of poetrie,
As Lynyan § did of philoſophie
Or law, or other art particulere;
But Deth that wol not ſuffre us dwellen here,
But as it were a twinkling of an eye,
Hem both hath ſlaine, and alle we ſhul dye.
But forth to tellen of this worthy man
That taughte me this Tale as I began,
I ſay that firſt he with highe ſtile enditeth
(Or he the body of his Tale writeth)
A proheme, in the which deſcriveth he
Piemont, and of Saluces the contree,
And ſpeketh of Apennin the hilles hie,
That ben the boundes of weſt Lumbardie,
And of Mount Veſulus in ſpecial,
Wher as the Poo out of a welle ſmal
Taketh his firſte ſpringing and his ſours,
That eſtward ay encreſeth in his cours
To Emelie ward, to Ferare and Veniſe,
The which a longe thing were to deviſe;
And trewely, as to my jugement,
Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,
Save that he wol, conveyen his matere:
But this is the Tale which that ye mow here.

§ Or *Linian*. The perſon meant was an eminent lawyer, and made a great noiſe (as we ſay) in his time.

THE CLERKES TALE.

THER is right at the weſt ſide of Itaille,
Doun at the rote of Veſulus the cold,
A luſty plain habundant of vitaille,
Ther many a toun and tour thou maiſt behold,
That founded were in time of fathers old,
And many another delitable ſighte,
And Saluces this noble contree highte.

A markis whilom lord was of that lond,
As were his worthy elders him before,
And obeyſant, ay redy to his hond,
Were all his lieges both leſſe and more:
Thus in delit he liveth, and hath don yore,
Beloved and drad, thurgh favour of Fortune,
Both of his lordes and of his commune.

Therwith he was, to ſpeken of linage,
The gentileſt yborne of Lumbardie,
A faire perſon, and ſtrong, and yong of age,
And ful of honour and of curteſie;
Diſcret ynough, his contree for to gie,
Sauf in ſome thinges that he was to blame,
And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

I blame him thus, that he conſidered nought
In time coming what might him betide,
But on his luſt preſent was all his thought,
And for to hauke and hunt on every ſide;
Wel neigh all other cures let he ſlide;
And eke he nol'd (and that was worſt of all)
Wedden no wif for ought that might befall.

Only that point his peple bare ſo ſore
That flockmel on a day to him they went,
And on of hem, that wiſeſt was of lore,
(Or elles that the lord wold beſt aſſent
That he ſhuld tell hem what the peple ment,
Or elles could he wel ſhew ſwiche matere)
He to the markis ſaid as ye ſhull here.

O noble Markis, your humanitee
Aſſureth us and yveth us hardineſſe,
As oft as time is of neceſſitee
That we to you mow tell our hevineſſe;
Accepteth, Lord, than of your gentilleſſe
That we with pitious herte unto you plaine,
And let your eres nat my vois diſdaine.

Al have I not to don in this matere
More than another man hath in this place,
Yet for as moch as ye, my Lord ſo dere,
Han alway ſhewed me favour and grace,
I dare the better aſke of you a ſpace
Of audience to ſhewen our requeſt,
And ye, my Lord, to don right as you leſt.

For certes, Lord, ſo wel us liketh you
And all your werke, and ever hath don, that we
Ne coulen not ourſelf deviſen how
We mighten live in more felicitee,
Save o thing, Lord, if it your wille be
That for to be a wedded man you leſt
Than were your peple in ſoverain hertes reſt.

Boweth your nekke under the bliſsful yok
Of ſoveraintee, and not of ſerviſe,
Which that men clepen Spouſaile or Wedlok:
And thinketh, Lord, among your thoghtes wiſe,
How that our days paſſe in ſondry wiſe;
For though we ſlepe, or wake, or rome, or ride,
Ay fleth the time, it wol no man abide.

And though your grene youthe floure as yet,
In crepeth age alway as ſtill as ſton,
And deth manaſeth every age, and ſmit
In eche eſtat, for ther eſcapeth non:
And al ſo certain as we knowe eche on
That we ſhul die, as uncertain we all
Ben of that day whan deth ſhal on us fall.

Accepteth than of us the trewe entent,
That never yet refuſeden your heſt,
And we wol, Lord, if that you wol aſſent,
Cheſe you a wife in ſhort time at the meſt
Borne of the gentilleſt and of the beſt
Of all this lond, ſo that it oughte ſeme
Honour to God and you as we can deme.

Deliver us out of all this beſy drede,
And take a wif for highe Goddes ſake;
For if it ſo befell, as God forbede,
That thurgh your deth your linage ſhulde ſlake,
And that a ſtrange ſucceſſour ſhuld take
Your heritage, o! wo were us on live;
Wherfore we pray you haſtily to wive.

Hir meke praiere and hir pitous chere
Made the markis for to han pitee.
Ye wol, quod he, min owen peple dere,
To that I never er thought conſtrainen me:
I me rejoyced of my libertee,
That ſelden time is found in mariage;
Ther I was free I moſte ben in ſervage.

But natheles I ſee your trewe entent,
And truſt upon your wit, and have don ay;
Wherfore of my free will I wol aſſent
To wedden me as ſone as ever I may:
But ther as ye han profred me to-day
To cheſen we a wif, I you releſe
That choiſe, and pray you of that profer ceſe.

For God it wot that children often ben
Unlike hir worthy eldres hem before:
Bountee cometh al of God, not of the ſtren
Of which they ben ygendred and ybore:
I truſt in Goddes bountee, and therfore
My mariage, and min eſtat and reſt,
I him betake; he may don as him leſt.

Let me alone in cheſing of my wif;
That charge upon my bak I wol endure:
But I you pray and charge upon your lif
That what wif that I take ye me aſſure
To worſhip hire, while that hire lif may dure,
In word and werk both here and elles where,
As ſhe an emperoures doughter were.

And forthermore this ſhuln ye ſwere, that ye
Again my chois ſhal never grutch ne ſtrive;
For ſith I ſhal forgo my libertee
At your requeſt, as ever mote I thrive
Ther as min herte is ſet ther wol I wive:
And but ye wol aſſent in ſwiche manere
I pray you ſpeke no more of this matere.

With hertly will they ſweren and aſſenten
To all this thing, ther ſaide not o wight nay,
Beſeching him of grace, or that they wenten,
That he wold granten hem a certain day
Of his ſpousaile as ſone as ever he may,
For yet alway the peple ſomewhat dred
Leſt that this markis wolde no wif wed.

He granted hem a day, ſwiche as him leſt,
On which he wold be wedded ſikerly,
And ſaid he did all this at hir requeſt;
And they with humble herte ful buxumly,
Kneling upon hir knees ful reverently,
Him thonken all: and thus they han an end
Of hir entente, and home agen they wend.

And hereupon he to his officeres
Commandeth for the feſte to purvay,
And to his privee knightes and ſquieres
Swiche charge he yave as hem liſt on hem lay,
And they to his commandement obey,
And eche of hem doth all his diligence
To do unto the feſte al reverence.

Pars ſecunda.

Nought fer fro thilke paleis honourable,
Wher as this markis ſhope his mariage,
Ther ſtood a thorpe, of ſighte delitable,
In which that poure folk of that village
Hadden hir beſtes and hir herbergage,
And of hir labour toke hir ſuſtenance,
After that the erthe yave hem habundance.

Among this poure folk ther dwelt a man
Which that was holden poureſt of hem all,
But highe God ſomtime ſenden can
His grace unto a litel oxes ſtall;
Janicola men of that thorpe him call:
A doughter had he, faire ynough to ſight,
And Griſildis this yonge maiden hight.

But ſpr to ſpeke of vertuous beautee,
Than was ſhe on the faireſt under ſonne.
Ful pourely yfoſtred up was ſhe;
No likerous luſt was in hire herte yronne:
Wel ofter of the well than of the tonne
She dranke; and for ſhe wolde vertue pleſe
She knew wel labour but non idel eſe.

But though this mayden tendre were of age,
Yet in the breſt of hire virginitee
Ther was encloſed ſad and ripe corage,
And in gret reverence and charitee
Hire olde poure fader foſtred ſhe:
A few ſheep ſpinning on the feld ſhe kept;
She wolde not ben idel til ſhe ſlept.

And whan ſhe homward came ſhe wolde bring
Wortes and other herbes times oft,
The which ſhe ſhred and ſethe for hire living,
And made hire bed ful hard and nothing ſoft;
And ay ſhe kept hire fader lif on loft
With every obeiſance and diligence
That child may don to fadres reverence.

Upon Griſilde, this poure creature,
Ful often ſithe this markis ſette his eye,
As he on hunting rode paraventure;
And whan it fell that he might hire eſpie,
He not with wanton loking of folie
His eyen caſt on hire, but in ſad wiſe
Upon hire chere he wold him oft aviſe;

Commending in his herte hire womanhede,
And eke hire vertue, paſſing any wight
Of ſo yong age as wel in chere as dede:
For though the peple have no gret in ſight
In vertue, he conſidered ful right
Hire bountee, and diſpoſed that he wold
Wedde hire only if ever he wedden ſhold.

The day of wedding came, but no wight can
Tellen what woman that it ſhulde be,
For which marvaille wondred many a man,
And ſaiden, whan they were in privetee,
Wol not our lord yet leve his vanitee?
Wol he not wedde? Alas, alas the while!
Why wol he thus himſelf and us begile?

But natheles this markis hath do make
Of gemmes ſette in gold and in aſure
Broches and ringes, for Griſildes ſake;
And of hire clothing toke he the meſure
Of a maiden like unto hire ſtature,
And eke of other ornamentes all
That unto ſwiche a wedding ſhulde fall.

The time of underne of the ſame day
Approcheth that this wedding ſhulde be,
And all the paleis put was in array,
Both halle and chambres, eche in his degree,
Houſes of office ſtuffed with plentee;
Ther mayſt thou ſee of deinteous vitaille
That may be found as fer as laſteth ſtaille.

This real markis richely arraide,
Lordes and ladies in his compagnie,
The which unto the feſte weren praide,
And of his retenue the bachelerie,
With many a ſoun of ſondry melodie,
Unto the village of the which I told
In this array the righte way they hold.

Griſilde of this (God wot) ful innocent
That for hire ſhapen was all this array,
To fetchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh home as ſone as ever ſhe may;
For wel ſhe had herd ſay that thilke day
The markis ſhulde wedde, and if ſhe might
She wolde fayn han ſeen ſom of that ſight.

She thought I wol with other maidens ſtond,
That ben my felawes, in our dore, and ſee
The markiſeſſe, and therto wol I fond

To don at home, as ſone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth unto me,
And than I may at leiſer hire behold,
If ſhe this way unto the Caſtel hold.
And as ſhe wolde over the threſwold gon
The markis came and gan hire for to call,
And ſhe ſet doun hire water-pot anon
Beſide the threſwold in an oxes ſtall,
And doun upon hire knees ſhe gan to fall,
And with ſad countenance kneleth ſtill,
Til ſhe had herd what was the lordes will.
This thoughtful markis ſpake unto this maid
Ful ſoberly, and ſaid in this manere;
Wher is your fader, Griſildis? he ſaid.
And ſhe with reverence in humble chere
Anſwered, Lord, he is al redy here.
And in ſhe goth withouten lenger lette,
And to the markis ſhe hire fader fette.
He by the hond than toke this poure man,
And ſaide thus whan he him had aſide;
Janicola, I neiſher may ne can
Longer the pleſance of min herte hide;
If that thou vouchefauf, what ſo betide,
Thy doughter wol I take or that I wend
As for my wif unto hire lives end.
Thou loveſt me, that wot I wel certain,
And art my faithful liegeman ybore,
And all that liketh me, I dare wel ſain,
It liketh thee, and ſpecially therfore
Tell me that point that I have ſaid before,
If that thou wolt unto this purpos drawe,
To taken me as for thy ſon in lawe?
This ſoden cas this man aſtoned ſo,
That red he wex, abaiſt, and al quaking
He ſtood; unnethes ſaid he wordes mo
But only thus; Lord, quod he, my willing
Is as ye wol, ne ageins your liking
I wol no thing, min owen Lord ſo dere;
Right as you liſt governeth this matere.
Than wol I, quod this markis ſoftely,
That in thy chambre I, and thou, and ſhe,
Have a collation; and woſt thou why?
For I wol aſk hire if it hire wille be
To be my wif, and reule hire after me?
And all this ſhal be don in thy preſence;
I wol not ſpeke out of thin audience.
And in the chambre, while they were aboute
The tretee, which as ye ſhul after here,
The peple came into the hous withoute,
And wondred hem in how honeſt manere
Eſtatifly ſhe kept hire fader dere:
But utterly Griſildis wonder might,
For never erſt ne ſaw ſhe ſwiche a ſight.
No wonder is though that ſhe be aſtoned
To ſee ſo gret a geſt come in that place,
She never was to non ſwiche geſtes woned,
For which ſhe loked with ful pale face.
But ſhortly forth this matere for to chace,
Thiſe arn the wordes that the markis ſaid
To this benigne veray faithful maid.
Griſilde, he ſaid, ye ſhuln wel underſtond
It liketh to your fader and to me
That I you wedde, and eke it may ſo ſtond,
As I ſuppoſe, ye woi that it ſo be:
But thiſe demaundes aſke I firſt (quod he)
That ſin it ſhall be don in haſty wiſe,
Wol ye aſſent, or elles you aviſe?
I ſay this, be ye redy with good herte
To all my luſt, and that I freely may,
As me beſt thinketh, do you laugh or ſmerte,
And never ye to grutchen, night ne day,
And eke whan I ſay Ya ye ſay Nay,
Neither by word ne frouning countenance?
Swere this, and here I ſwere our alliance.
Wondring upon this thing, quaking for drede,
She ſaide, Lorde, indigne and unworthy
Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede,
But as ye wol yourſelf, right ſo wol I:
And here I ſwere that never willingly
In werk ne thought I n'ill you diſobeie
For to be ded, though me were loth to deie.
This is ynough, Griſilde min, quod he.
And forth he goth with a ful ſobre chere
Out at the dore, and after than came ſhe,
And to the peple he ſaid in this manere;
This is my wif, quod he, that ſtondeth here;
Honoureth her, and loveth hire, I pray,
Who ſo me loveth; ther n'is no more to ſay.
And for that nothing of hire olde gere
She ſhulde bring into his hous, he bad
That women ſhuld deſpoilen hire right there,
Of which thiſe ladies weren nothing glad
To handle hire clothes wherin ſhe was clad:
But natheles this maiden bright of hew
Fro foot to hed they clothed han all new.
Hire heres han they kempt, that lay untreſſed
Ful rudely, and with hir fingres ſmal
A coroune on hire hed they han ydreſſed,
And ſette hire ful of nouches gret and ſmal.
Of hire array what ſhuld I make a tale?
Unneth the peple hire knew for hire fairneſſe
Whan ſhe tranſmewed was in ſwiche richeſſe.
This markis hath hire ſpouſed with a ring
Brought for the ſame cauſe, and than hire ſette
Upon an hors ſnow-white and wel ambling,
And to his paleis, or be lenger lette,
(With joyful peple that hire lad and mette)
Conveyed hire; and thus the day they ſpende
In revel til the ſonne gan deſcende.
And ſhortly forth this tale for to chace,
I ſay that to this new markiſeſſe
God hath ſwiche favour ſent hire of his grace,
That it ne ſemeth not by likelineſſe
That ſhe was borne and fed in rudeneſſe,
As in a cote or in an oxes ſtall,
But nouriſhed in an emperoures hall.
To every wight ſhe waxen is ſo dere
And worſhipful, that folk ther ſhe was bore,
And ſro hire birthe knew hire yere by yere,
Unnethes trowed they, but dorſt han ſwore
That to Janicle, of which I ſpake before,
She doughter n'as; for as by conjecture
Hem thoughte ſhe was another creature.
For though that ever vertuous was ſhe,
She was enereſed in ſwiche excellence
Of thewes good, yſet in high bountee,
And ſo diſcrete, and faire of eloquence,
So benigne, and ſo digne of reverence,
And coude ſo the peples herte embrace,
That eche hire loveth that loketh on hire face.

Not only of Saluces in the toun
Publiſhed was the bountee of hire name,
But eke beſide in many a regioun;
If on ſaith wel, another ſaith the ſame:
So ſpredeth of hire hie bountee the fame,
That men and women, yong as wel as old,
Gon to Saluces upon hire to behold.

Thus Walter lowly, nay but really,
Wedded with fortunat honeſtee;
In Goddes pees liveth ful eſily
At home, and grace ynough outward had he:
And for he ſaw that under low degree
Was honeſt vertu hid, the peple him held
A prudent man, and that is ſeen ful ſeld.

Not only this Griſildis thurgh hire wit
Coude all the fete of wifly homlineſſe;
But eke whan that the cas required it,
The comune profit coude ſhe redreſſe:
Ther n'as diſcord, rancour, ne hevineſſe,
In all the lond that ſhe ne coude appeſe,
And wiſely bring hem all in hertes eſe.

Though that hire huſbond abſent were or non
If gentilmen or other of that contree
Were wroth, ſhe wolde bringen hem at on.
So wiſe and ripe wordes hadde ſhe,
And jugement of ſo grete equitee,
That ſhe from heven ſent was, as men wend,
Peple to ſave, and every wrong to amend.

Not longe time after that this Griſilde
Was wedded, ſhe a doughter hath ybore,
All had hire lever han borne a knave childe:
Glad was the markis and his folk therfore;
For though a maiden childe come all before,
She may unto a knave child atteine,
By likelyhed, ſin ſhe n'is not barreine.

Pars tertia.

Ther fell, as it befalleth times mo,
Whan that this childe had ſouked but a throwe,
This markis in his herte longed ſo
To tempt his wif, hire ſadneſſe for to knowe,
That he ne might out of his herte throwe
This marveillous deſir his wif to aſſay:
Nedlees, God wot, he thought hire to affray.

He had aſſaied hire ynough before,
And found hire ever good: what needeth it
Hire for to tempt, and alway more and more?
Though ſome men praiſe it for a ſubtil wit;
But as for me, I ſay that evil it ſit
To aſſay a wife whan that it is no nede,
And putten hire in anguiſh and in drede.

For which this markis wrought in this manere:
He came a-night alone ther as ſhe lay
With ſtern face and with full trouble chere,
And ſayde thus, Griſilde, (quod he) that day
That I you toke out of your poure array,
And put you in eſtat of high nobleſſe,
Ye han it not forgetten, as I geſſe;

I ſay, Griſilde, this preſent dignitee,
In which that I have put you, as I trow,
Maketh you not forgetful for to be
That I you toke in poure eſtat ful low,
For ony wele ye mote yourſelven know,
Take hede of every word that I you ſay,
Ther is ne wight that hereth it but we tway.

Ye wote yourſelf wel how that ye came here
Into this hous, it is not long ago;
And though to me ye be right leſs and dere,
Unto my gentils ye be nothing ſo:
They ſay to hem it is gret ſhame and wo
For to be ſuggetes and ben in ſervage
To thee, that borne art of a ſmal linage.

And namely ſin thy doughter was ybore,
Thiſe wordes hen they ſpoken douteles;
But I deſire, as I have done before,
To live my lif with hem in reſt and pees:
I may not in this cas be recheles:
I mote do with thy doughter for the beſt,
Not as I wold, but as my gentils leſt.

And yet, God wote, this is ful loath to me;
But natheles withouten your weting
I wol nought do; but thus wol I (quod he)
That ye to me aſſenten in this thing;
Shew now your patience in your werking
That ye me hight and ſwore in your village
The day that maked was our mariage.

Whan ſhe had herd all this, ſhe not ameved
Neyther in word, in chere, ne countenance,
(For as it ſemed, ſhe was not agreved)
She ſayde, Lord, all lith in your pleaſance;
My child and I with hertely obeiſance
Ben youres all, and ye may ſave or ſpill
Your owen thing: werketh after your will.

Ther may no thing, ſo God my ſoule ſave,
Like unto you that may diſpleſen me;
Ne I deſire nothing for to have,
Ne drede for to leſe, ſauf only ye:
This will is in myn herte, and ay ſhall be,
No length of time or deth may this deface,
Ne change my courage to an other place.

Glad was this markis for hire anſwering,
But yet he feined as he were not ſo;
Al drery was his chere and his loking,
Whan that he ſhuld out of the chamber go.
Sone after this, a furlong way or two,
He prively hath told all his entent
Unto a man, and to his wif him ſent.

A maner ſergeant was this prive man,
The which he faithful often founden had
In things gret, and eke ſwiche folk wel can
Don execution on things bad;
The lord knew wel that he him loved and drad.
And whan this ſergeant wiſt his lordes will,
Into the chambre he ſtalked him ful ſtill.

Madame, he ſayd, ye mote foryeve it me,
Though I do thing to which I am conſtreined;
Ye ben ſo wiſe, that right wel knowen ye
That lordes heſtes may not ben yfeined;
They may wel be bewailed and complained,
But men mote nedes to hir luſt obey,
And ſo wol I; ther n'is no more to ſay.

The child I am commanded for to take—
And ſpake no more, but out the child he hent
Diſpitouſly, and gan a chere to make,
As though he wold have ſlain it or he went.
Griſildis muſt al ſuffer and al conſent;
And as a lambe ſhe ſitteth meke and ſtill,
And let this cruel ſergeant do his will.

Suſpecious was the diffame of this man,
Suſpect his face, ſuſpect his word alſo,
Suſpect the time in which he this began:
Alas! hire doughter, that ſhe loved ſo
She weinde he wold han ſlaien it right tho;
But natheles ſhe neither wept ne ſiked,
Conforming hire to that the markis liked.

But at the laſt to ſpeken ſhe began,
And meekely ſhe to the ſergeant praid
(So as he was a worthie gentilman)
That ſhe might kiſſe hire child or that it deid;
And in hire barme this litel child ſhe leid;
With ful ſad face, and gan the child to bliſſe,
And lulled it, and after gan it kiſſe.

And thus ſhe ſayd in hire benigne vois;
Farewel, my child, I ſhal the never ſee,
But ſin I have thee marked with the crois,
Of thilke fader yblefſed mote thou be
That for us died upon a crois of tree,
Thy ſoule, litel child, I him betake,
For this night ſhalt thou dien for my ſake.

I trow that to a norice in this cas
It had been hard this ronthe for to ſee;
Wel might a moder than han cried Alas!
But natheles ſo ſad ſtedfaſt was ſhe,
That ſhe endured all adverſitee.
And to the ſergeant meekely ſhe ſayde,
Have here agen your litel yonge mayde.

Goth now (quod ſhe) and doth my lordes heſt:
And o thing wold I pray you of your grace,
But if my lord forbade you at the leſt,
Burieth this litel body in ſom place
That beſtes ne no briddes it to-race.
But he no word to that purpos wold ſay,
But toke the child, and went upon his way.

This ſergeant came unto his lord again,
And of Grifildes wordes and hire chere
He told him point for point, in ſhort and plain,
And him preſented with his doughter dere.
Somwhat this lord hath routhe in his manere,
But natheles his purpos held he ſtill,
As lordes don whan they wol have hir will;

And bad this ſergeant that he prively
Shulde this child ful ſofte wind and wrappe,
With alle circumſtances tendrely,
And carry it in a cofre or in a lappe;
But upon peine his hed of for to ſwappe
That no man ſhulde know of his entent,
Ne whens he came ne whider that he went;

But at Boloigne, unto his ſuſter dere,
That thilke time of Pavie was Counteſſe,
He ſhuld it take and ſhew hire this matere,
Beſeching hire to don hire beſineſſe,
This child to foſtren in all gentilleſſe;
And whoſe child that it was he bade hire hide
From every wight, for ought that may betide.

The ſergeant goth, and hath fulfilde this thing.
But to this marquis now retorne we;
For now goth he ful faſt, imagining
If by his wives chere he mighte ſee,
Or by hire wordes apperceive, that ſhe
Were changed; but he never could hire finde
But ever in oon ylike ſad and kinde.

As glad, as humble, as buſy in ſervice
And eke in love, as ſhe was wont to be,
Was ſhe to him in every manner wiſe;
Ne of hire doughter not a word ſpake ſhe:
Non accident for non adverſitee
Was ſeen in hire, ne never hire doughters name
Ne nevened ſhe for erneſt ne for game.

Pars quarta.

In this eſtat ther paſſed ben foure yere
Er ſhe with childe was, but as God wold,
A knave childe ſha bare by this Waltere
Ful gracious, and fair for to behold;
And whan that folk it to his fader told,
Not only he but all his contree mery
Was for this childe, and God they thonk and hery.

Whan it was two yere old, and from the breſt
Departed of his norice, on a day
This markis caughte yet another leſt
To tempte his wif yet ofter, if he may.
O! nedeles was ſhe tempted in aſſay:
But wedded men ne connen no meſure
Whan that they finde a patient creature.

Wif, quod this markis, ye han herd or this
My peple ſikely beren our mariage,
And namely ſin my ſone yboren is,
Now is it werſe than ever in al our age;
The murmur ſleth myn herte and my corage,
For to myn eres cometh the vois ſo ſmerte,
That it wel nie deſtroyed hath myn herte.

Now ſay they thus; Whan Walter is agon,
Than ſhall the blood of Janicle ſuccede,
And ben our lord, for other han we non.
Swiche wordes ſayn my peple, it is no drede;
Wel ought I of ſwiche murmur taken hede,
For certainly I drede al ſwiche ſentence,
Though they not plainen in myn audience.

I worde live in pees if that I might;
Wherefore I am diſpoſed utterly,
As I his ſuſter ſerved er by night,
Right ſo thinke I to ſerve him prively.
This warne I you, that ye not ſodenly
Out of yourſelf for no wo ſhuld outraie;
Beth patient, and therof I you praie.

I have, quod ſhe, ſayd thus, and ever ſhal,
I wol no thing, ne n'ill ne thing certain,
But as you liſt: not greveth me at al
Though that my doughter and my ſone be ſlain
At your commandement: that is to ſain,
I have not had no part of children twein
But firſt ſikeneſſe and after wo and peine.

Ye ben my lord, doth with your owen thing
Right as you liſt: aſketh no rede of me;
For as I left at home al my clothing
Whan I came firſt to you, right ſo (quod ſhe)
Left I my will and all my libertee,
And toke your clothing; wherefore I you prey
Doth your pleſance, I wol youre luſt obey.

And certes, if I hadde preſcince
Your will to know er ye your luſt me told,
I wold it do withouten negligence:
But now I wote your luſt, and what ye wold,
All your pleſance ferme and ſtable I hold;
For wiſt I that my deth might do you eſe
Right gladely wold I dien you to pleſe.

Deth may not maken no comparisoun
Unto your love. And whan this markis say
The constance of his wif, he cast adoun
His eyen two, and wondreth how she may
In patience suffer al this array;
And forth he goth with drery contenance.
But to his herte it was ful gret plesance.

This ugly sergeant in the same wise
That he hire doughter caughte, right so he
(Or werse, if men can any werse devise)
Hath hent hire sone, that ful was of beautee:
And ever in on so patient was she
That she no chere made of hevinesse,
But kist hire sone, and after gan it blesse.

Save this she praied him, if that he might,
Hire litel sone he wold in erthe grave,
His tendre limmes, delicat to sight,
Fro foules and fro bestes for to save.
But she non answer of him mighte have:
He wen his way as him no thing ne rought,
But to Boloigne he tenderly it brought.

This markis wondereth ever lenger the more
Upon hire patience: and if that he
Ne hadde sothely knowen ther before
That parfitly hire children loved she,
He wold han wend that of som subtiltee
And of malice, or for cruel corage,
That she had suffred this with sad visage.

But wel he knew that next himself certain,
She loved hire children best in every wise.
But now of women wold I aske fayn,
If thise assaies mighten not suffise?
What coud a sturdy husbond more devise
To preve hire wifhood and hire stedfastnesse,
And he continuing ever in sturdinesse?

But ther ben folk of swiche condition,
That whan they han a certain purpos take,
They cannot stint of hir entention,
But right as they were bounden to a stake,
They wol not of hir firste purpos slake:
Right so this markis fully hath purposed
To tempt his wif as he wes first disposed.

He waiteth if by word or contenance
That she to him was changed of corage;
But never coud he finden varience;
She was aye on in herte and in visage;
And aye the further she was in age,
The more trewe (if that it were possible)
She was to him in love, and penible.

For which it semed thus, that of hem two
Ther was but o will; for as Walter lest,
The same lust was hire plesance also;
And God be thanked, all fell for the best.
She shewed wel for ne wordly unrest
A wif, as of hireself, no thing ne sholde
Wille in effect but as hire husbond wolde.

The slandre of Walter wonder wide spradde,
That of a cruel herte he wikkedly,
For he a poure woman wedded hadde,
Hath murdred both his children prively:
Swich murmur was among hem comunly.
No wonder is, for to the peples ere
Ther came no word but that they murdred were.

For which ther as his peple therbefore
Had loved him wel, the slandre of his diffame
Made hem that they him hateden therefore:
To ben a mudrour is an hateful name.
But natheles for erneste ne for game
He of his cruel purpos n'olde stente:
To tempt his wif was sette all his entente.

Whan that his doughter twelf yere was of age
He to the court of Rome, in subtil wise
Enformed of his will, sent his message,
Commanding him swiche billes to devise
As to his cruel purpos may suffise,
How that the Pope, as for his peples rest,
Bade him to wed another if him lest.

I say he bade they shulden contrefete
The Popes bulles, making mention
That he hath leve his firste wif to lete,
As by the Popes dispensation
To stinten rancour and dissention
Betwix his peple and him. Thus spake the bull,
The which they han publisshed at the full.

The rude peple, as no wonder is,
Wenden ful wel that it had ben right so;
But whan thise tidings came to Grisildis,
I deme that hire herte was ful of wo;
But she ylike sad for evermo
Disposed was, this humble creature,
The adversitee of fortune al to endure;

Abiding ever his lust and his plesance
To whom that she was yeven herte and al,
As to hire veray worldly sufficance.
But shortly if this storie tell I shal,
This markis writen hath in special
A lettre, in which he sheweth his entente,
And secretly he to Boloigne it sente

To the Erl of Pavie, which that hadde tho
Wedded his suster, prayed he specially
To bringen home agein his children two
In honourable estat al openly;
But o thing he him prayed utterly,
That he to no wight, though men wold enquere,
Shulde not tell whos children that they were.

But say the maiden shuld ywedded be
Unto the Markis of Saluces anon.
And as this erl was prayed, so did he;
For at day sette he on his way is gon
Toward Saluces, and lordes many on
In rich arraie, this maiden for to gide,
Hire yonge brother riding hire beside.

Arraied was toward hire mariage
This fresshe maiden, ful of gemmes clere,
Hire brother, which that seven yere was of age,
Arraied eke ful fresh in his manere:
And thus in gret noblesse and with glad chere
Toward Saluces shaping hir journay
Fro day to day they riden in hir way.

Pars quinta.

Among al his, after this wicked usage,
This markis yet his wif to tempten more
To the uttereste prefe of hire corage,
Fully to have experience and lore
If that she were as stedefast as before,

He on a day in open audience
Fal boiſtouſly hath ſaid hire this ſentence:
Certes, Griſilde, I had ynough pleſance
To han you to my wif for your goodneſſe,
And for your trouthe and for your obeyſance,
Not for your linage ne for your richeſſe;
But now know I in very ſothfaſtneſſe
That in gret lordſhip, If I me wel aviſe,
Ther is gret ſervitude in ſondry wife.
I may not don as every ploughman may:
My peple me conſtreineth for to take
Another wif, and crien day by day;
And eke the Pope, rancour for to ſlake,
Conſenteth it, that dare I undertake:
And trewely thus moche I wol you ſay,
My newe wif is coming by the way.
Be ſtrong of herte, and void anon hire place,
And thilke dower that ye broughten me
Take it agen; I grant it of my grace.
Returneth to your fadres hous, (quod he)
No man may alway have proſperitee.
With even herte I rede you to endure
The ſtroke of Fortune or of aventure.
And ſhe agen anſwerd in patience;
My Lord, quod ſhe, I wote and wiſt alway
How that betwixen your magnificence
And my poverte no wight ne can ne may
Maken compariſon; it is no nay:
I ne held me never digne in no manere
To be your wif, ne yet your chamberere.
And in this hous ther ye me lady made
(The highe God take I for my witneſſe,
And all ſo wiſly he my ſoule glad)
I never held ne lady me maiſtreſſe,
But humble ſervant to your worthineſſe,
And ever ſhal, while that my life may dure,
Aboven every wordly creature.
That ye ſo longe of your benignitee
Han holden me in honour and nobley,
Wheras I was not worthy for to be,
That thanke I God and you, to whom I prey
Forȝelde it you; ther is no more to ſey.
Unto my fader gladly wol I wende,
And with him dwell unto my lives ende.
Ther I was foſtred of a childe ful ſmal;
Til I be ded, my lif ther wol I lede,
A widew clene in body, herte, and al:
For ſith I ȝave to you my maidenhede,
And am your trewe wif, it is no drede,
God ſhilde ſwiche a lordes wif to take
Another man to huſbond or to make.
And of your newe wif God of his grace
So graunte you wele and preſperite,
For I wol gladly yelden hire my place,
In which that I was bliſsful wont to be:
For ſith it liketh you, my Lord, (quod ſhe)
That whilom weren all myn hertes reſt,
That I ſhal gon, I wol go whan you leſt.
But ther as ye me profre ſwiche dowaire
As I firſt brough, it is wel in my mind
It were my wretched clothes, nothing faire,
The which to me were hard now for to find.
O goode God! how gentil and how kind
Ye ſemed by your ſpeche and your viſage
The day that maked was oure marriage!

But ſoth is ſaid, algate I find it trewe,
For in effect it preved is on me,
Love is not old as whan that it is newe.
But certes, Lord, for non adverſitee
To dein in this cas, it ſhal not be
That ever in word or werke I ſhal repent
That I you ȝave min herte in hole entent.
My Lord, ye wote that in my fadres place
Ye did me ſtripe out of my poure wede,
And richely ye clad me of your grace;
To you brought I nought elles out of drede
But faith, and nakedneſſe, and maidenhede;
And here agen your clothing I reſtore,
And eke your wedding ring, for evermore.
The remenant of your jeweles redy be
Within your chambre, I dare it ſafly ſain.
Naked out of my fadres hous (quod ſhe)
I came, and naked I mote turne again.
All your pleſance wolde I folwe fain;
But yet I hope it be not your entent
That I ſmokles out of your paleis went.
Ye coude not do ſo diſhoneſt a thing,
That thilke wombe, in which your children lay,
Shulde before the peple in my walking
Be ſeen al bare; wherefore I you prey
Let me not like a worme go by the way:
Remembre you, min owen Lord ſo dere,
I was your wif, though I unworthy were.
Wherfore in guerdon of my maidenhede,
Which that I brought and not agen I bere,
As vouchefauf to yeve me to my mede
But ſwiche a ſmok as I was wont to were,
That I therwith may wrie the wombe of hire
That was your wif. And here I take my leve
Of you, min owen Lord, leſt I you greve.
The ſmok, quod he, that thou haſt on thy bake
Let it be ſtill, and bere it forth with thee.
But wel unnethes thilke word he ſpake,
But went his way for routhe and for pitee.
Before the folk hireſelven ſtripeth ſhe,
And in hire ſmok, with foot and hed all bare,
Toward hire fadres hous forth is ſhe fare.
The folk hire folwen weping in hir wey,
And Fortune ay they curſen as they gon;
But ſhe fro weping kept hire eyen drey,
Ne in this time word ne ſpak ſhe non.
Hire fader, that this tiding herd anon,
Curſeth the day and time that Nature
Shope him to ben a lives creature.
For out of doute this old poure man
Was ever in ſuſpect of hire mariage;
For ever he demed, ſin it firſt began,
That whan the lord fulfilled had his corage,
Him wolde thinke it were a diſparage
To his eſtat ſo lowe for to alight,
And voiden hire as ſone as ever he might.
Agein his doughter haſtily goth he,
(For he by noiſe of folk knew hire coming)
And with hire olde cote, as it might be,
He covereth hire, ful ſorwefully weping
But on hire body might he it not bring,
For rude was the cloth, and more of age
By daies fele than at hire mariage.
Thus with hire fader for a certain ſpace
Dwelleth this flour of wifly patience,

That nother by hire wordes ne hire face,
Beforn the folk, ne eke in hir abſence,
Ne ſhewed ſhe that hire was don offence,
Ne of hire high eſtat no remembrance
Ne hadde ſhe as by hire contenance.
No wonder is, for in hire gret eſtat
Hire goſt was ever in pleine humilitee;
No tendre mouth, no herte delicat,
No pompe, no ſemblant of realtee,
But ful of patient benignitee,
Diſcrete, and prideles, ay honourable,
And to hire huſbond ever meke and ſtable.
Men ſpeke of Job, and moſt for his humbleſſe,
As clerkes whan hem liſt can wel endite,
Namely of men, but as in ſothfaſtneſſe,
Though clerkes preiſen women but a lite,
Ther can no man in humbleſſe him acquite
As woman can, ne can be half ſo trewe
As women ben, but it be falle of newe.

Pars ſexta.

Fro Boloigne is this Earl of Pavie come,
Of which the fame up ſprang to more and leſſe:
And to the peples eres all and ſome
Was couth eke that a newe markiſeſſe
He with him brought in ſwiche pomp and richeſſe,
That never was ther ſeen with mannes eye
So noble array in al Weſt Lumbardie.
The markis, which that ſhope and knew all this,
Er that this erl was come ſent his meſſage
For thilke poure ſely Griſildis,
And ſhe with humble herte and glad viſage,
Not with no ſwollen thought in hire ſorage,
Came at his heſt, and on hire knees hire ſette,
And reverently and wiſely ſhe him grette.
Griſilde, (quod he) my will is utterly
This maiden that ſhal wedded be to me
Received be to-morwe as really
As it poſſible is in myn hous to be;
And eke that every wight in his degree
Have his eſtat in ſitting and ſervice,
And high pleſance, as I can beſt deviſe.
I have no woman ſuffiſant certain
The chambres for to array in ordinance
After my lüſt, and therfore wolde I fain
That thin were all ſwiche manere governance;
Thou knoweſt eke of old all my pleſance:
Though thin array be bad, and evil beſey,
Do thou thy devoir at the leſte wey.
Not only, Lord, that I am glad (quoth ſhe)
To don your luſt, but I deſire alſo
You for to ſerve and pleſe in my degree
Withouten fainting, and ſhal evermo:
Ne never for no wele ne for no wo
Ne ſhal the goſt within myn herte ſtente
To love you beſt with all my trewe entente.
And with that word ſhe gan the hous to dight,
And tables for to ſette, and beddes make,
And peined her to don all that ſhe might,
Praying the chambereres for Goddes ſake
To haſten hem, and faſte ſwepe and ſhake;
And ſhe, the moſte ſerviceable of all,
Hath every chambre arraied and his hall.

Abouten undern gan this erl alight
That with him brought thiſe noble children twey,
For which the peple ran to ſee the ſight
Of hir array, ſo richely beſey;
And that at erſt amonges hem they ſey
That Walter was no fool, though that him leſt
To change his wif, for it was for the beſt.
For ſhe is fairer, as they demen all,
Than his Griſilde, and more tendre of age,
And fairer fruit betwene hem ſhulde fall,
And more pleſant, for hire high linage:
Hire brother eke ſo faire was of viſage
That hem to ſeen the peple hath caught pleſance,
Commending now the markis governance.
O ſtormy peple, unſad and ever untrew,
And undiſcrete and changing as a fane,
Delighting ever in rombel that is newe,
For like the mone waxen ye and wane:
A ful of clapping, dere ynough a jane,
Your dome is fals, your conſtance evil preveth,
Ay ful gret fool is he that on you leveth!
Thus ſaiden ſade folk in that citee
Whan that the peple gaſed up and doun,
For they were glad right for the noveltee
To have a new lady of hir toun.
No more of this make I now mentioun,
But to Griſilde agen I wol me dreſſe.
And tell hire conſtance and hire beſineſſe.
Ful beſy was Griſilde in every thing
That to the feſte was appertinent;
Right naught was ſhe abaiſt of hire clothing,
Though it were rude, and ſomdel eke to-rent.
But with glade chere to the yate is went,
With other folk, to grete the markiſeſſe,
And after that doth forth hire beſineſſe.
With ſo glad chere his geſtes ſhe receiveth,
And conningly everich in his degree,
That no defaut no man apperceiveth,
But ay they wondren what ſhe mighte be
That in ſo poure array was for to ſee,
And coude ſwiche honour and reverence,
And worthily they preiſen hire prudence.
In all this mene while ſhe ne ſtent
This maide and eke hire brother to commend,
With all hire herte in ful benigne entent,
So wel that no man coud hire preiſe amend;
But at the laſt whan that thiſe lordes wend
To ſitten doun to mete, he began to call
Griſilde, as ſhe was beſy in the hall.
Griſilde, (quod he, as it were in his play)
How liketh thee my wif and hire beautee?
Right wel, my Lord, quod ſhe, for in good fay
A fairer ſaw I never non than ſhe;
I pray to God yeve you proſperitee,
And ſo I hope that he wol to you ſend
Pleſance ynough unto your lives end.
O thing beſeech I you and warne alſo,
That ye ne prikke with no turmenting
This tendre maiden as ye han do me.
For ſhe is foſtred in hire nouriſhing
More tendrely, and to my ſuppoſing
She mighte not adverſitee endure
As coude a poure foſtred creature.

And whan this Walter ſaw hire patience,
Hire glad chere, and no malice at all,
And he ſo often hadde don offence,
And ſhe ay ſade and conſtant as a wall,
Continuing ever hire innocence over all,
This ſturdy markis gan his herte dreſſe
To rewe upon hire wifly ſtedefaſtneſſe.

This is ynough, Grifilde min, quod he,
Be now no more agaſt ne evil apaid;
I have thy faith and thy benignitee,
As wel as ever woman was, aſſaid,
In gret eſtat and poverelich arraid:
Now know I, dere wif, thy ſtedefaſtneſſe;
And hire in armes toke, and gan to keſſe.

And ſhe for wonder toke of it no kepe;
She herde not what thing he to hire ſaid;
She ferde as ſhe had ſtert out of a ſlepe,
Til ſhe out of hire maſedneſſe abraid.
Grifilde, quod he, by God that for us deid,
Thou art my wif; non other I ne have
Ne never had, as God my ſoule ſave.

This is thy doughter which thou haſt ſuppoſed
To be my wif; that other faithfully
Shal be min heir, as I have ay diſpoſed;
Thou bare hem of thy body trewely;
At Bologne have I kept hem prively:
Take hem agen, for now maiſt thou not ſay
That thou haſt lorn non of thy children tway.

And folk that otherwiſe han ſaid of me,
I warne hem wel that I have don this dede
For no malice ne for no crueltee,
But for to aſſay in thee thy womanhede,
And not to ſlee my children (God forbede)
But for to kepe hem prively and ſtill
Til I thy purpos knew and all thy will.

Whan ſhe this herd, aſwoune doun ſhe falleth
For pitous joye; and after hire ſwouning
She both hire yonge children to hire calleth,
And in hire armes, pitouſly weping,
Embraceth hem, and tendrely kiſſing
Ful like a moder, with hire ſalte teres
She bathed both hir viſage and hir heres.

O, ſwiche a pitous thing it was to ſee
Hire ſwouning, and hire humble vois to here!
Grand mercy! Lord, God thank it you (quod ſhe)
That ye han ſaved me my childten dere:
Now rekke I never to be ded right here,
Sin I ſtond in your love and in your grace,
No force of deth, ne whan my ſpirit pace.

O tendre, o dere, o yonge, children mine!
Your woful mother wened ſtedfaſtly
That cruel houndes or ſom foul vermine
Had eten you; but God of his mercy
And your benigne fader tendrely
Hath don you kepe: and in that ſame ſtound
Al ſodenly ſhe ſwapt adoun to ground.

And in hire ſwough ſo ſadly holdeth ſhe
Hire children two, whan ſhe gan hem embrace,
That with gret ſleight and gret difficultee
The children from hire arm they gan arrace.
O! many a tere on many a pitous face
Doun ran of hem that ſtoden hire beſide;
Unnethe abouten hire might they abide.

Walter hire gladeth, and hire ſorwe ſlaketh;
She riſeth up abaſhed from hire trance,
And every wight hire joye and feſte maketh
Til ſhe hath caught agen hire contenance.
Walter hire doth ſo faithfully pleſance,
That it was deintee for to ſeen the chere
Betwixt hem two ſin they ben met in fere.

Thiſe ladies, whan that they hir time ſey,
Han taken hire, and into chambre gon,
And ſtripen hire out of hire rude arrey,
And in a cloth of gold that brighte ſhone,
With a coroune of many a riche ſtone
Upon hire hed, they into hall hire broughte,
And ther ſhe was honoured as hire ought.

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful end,
For every man and woman doth his might
This day in mirth and revel to diſpend,
Til on the welkin ſhone the ſterres bright;
For more ſolempne in every mannes ſight
This feſte was, and greter of coſtage,
Than was the revel of hire mariage.

Ful many a yere in high proſperitee
Liven thiſe two in concord and in reſt,
And richely his doughter maried he
Unto a lord, on of the worthieſt
Of all Itaille, and than in pees and reſt
His wives fader in his court he kepeth
Til that the ſoule out of his body crepeth.

His ſone ſuccedeth in his heritage,
In reſt and pees, after his fadres day,
And fortunat was eke in mariage,
Al put he not his wif in gret aſſay:
This world is not ſo ſtrong, it is no nay,
As it hath ben in olde times yore,
And herkneth what this auctour ſaith therfore.

This ſtory is ſaid, not for that wives ſhuld
Folwe Griſilde as in humilitee,
For it were importable tho they wold,
But for that every wight in his degree
Shulde be conſtant in adverſitee
As was Griſilde, therfore Petrark writeth
This ſtorie, which with high ſtile he enditeth.

For ſith a woman was ſo patient
Unto a mortal man, wel more we ought
Receiven all in gree that God us ſent.
For gret ſkill is he preve that he wrought;
But he ne tempteth no man that he bought,
As ſaith Seint Jame, if ye his piſtell rede;
He preveth folk al day, it is no drede;

And ſuffreth us, as for our exerciſe,
With ſharpe ſcourges of adverſitee
Ful often to be bete in ſondry wiſe,
Not for to know our will, for certes he,
Or we were borne, knew all our freelctee,
And for our beſt is all his governance;
Let us than live in vertuous ſuffrance.

But o word, Lordings, herkneth or I go:
It were ful hard to finden now adayes
In all a toun Griſildes three or two;
For if that they were put to ſwiche aſſayes
The gold of hem hath now ſo bad alayes
With bras, that though the coine be faire at eye
It wolde rather braſt atwo than plie.

For which here, for the Wives love of Bathe,
Whas lif and al hire ſecte God maintene
In high maiſtrie, and elles were it ſcathe,

I wol with luſty herte freſſhe and grene
Say you a ſong to gladen you I wene,
And let us ſtint of erneſtful matere.
Herkneth my ſong, that ſaith in this manere:
Griſilde is ded, and eke hire patience,
And both at ones buried in Itaille,
For which I crie in open audience,
No wedded man ſo hardy be to aſſaille
His wives patience, in truſt to find
Griſildes, for in certain he ſhal faille.
O noble wives! ful of high prudence,
Let non humilitee your tonges naile,
Ne let no clerk have cauſe or diligence
To write of you a ſtorie of ſwiche mervaille
As of Griſildis, patient and kinde,
Leſt Chichevache you ſwalwe in hire entraille,
Folweth Ecco, that holdeth no ſilence,
But ever anſwereth at the countretaille:
Beth not bedaffed for your innocence,
But ſharply taketh on you the governaille;
Empreinteth wel this leſſon in your minde
For comun profit, ſith it may availle.
Ye archewives! ſtondeth ay at defence,
Sin ye be ſtrong as is a gret camaille,
Ne ſuffreth not that men do you offence.
And ſclendre wives, feble as in bataille,
Beth egre as is a tigre yond in Inde;
Ay clappeth as a mill I you counſaille.
Ne drede hem not, doth hem no reverence,
For though this huſbond armed be in maille,
The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
Shal perce his breſt and eke his aventaille:
In jalouſie I rede eke thou him binde,
And thou ſhalt make him couche as doth a quaille.
If thou be faire, ther folk ben in preſence
Shew thou thy viſage and thin apparaille;
If thou be foule, be free of thy diſpence;
To get thee frendes ay do thy travaille:
Be ay of chere as light as leſe on linde,
And let him care, and wepe, and wringe, and
waille.

THE MARCHANTES PROLOGUE.

Wepyng and wailing, care, and other ſorwe,
I have ynough on even and on morwe,
Quod the Marchant, and ſo have other mo
That wedded ben; I trowe that it be ſo,
For wel I wot it fareth ſo by me.
I have a wif the werſte that may be,
For though the fend to hire ycoupled were,
She wolde him overmatche, I dare wel ſwere.
What ſhulde I you reherſe in ſpecial
Hire high malice? ſhe is a ſhrew at al.
Ther is a long and a large difference
Betwix Griſildes grete patience
And of my wife the paſſing cruelnee.
Were I embounden, all ſo mote I the,
I wolde never eft comen in the ſnare.
We wedded men live in ſorwe and care;
Aſſay it who ſo wol, and he ſhal finde
That I ſay ſoth, by Seint Thomas of Inde,
As for the more part, I ſay not alle;
God ſhilde that it ſhulde ſo befalle.
A, good Sire Hoſte, I have ywedded be
Thiſe monethes two, and more not parde;
And yet I trowe that he that all his lif
Wifes hath ben, though that men wolde him riſe
Into the herte, ne coude in no manere
Tellen ſo much ſorwe as I you here
Coud tellen of my wives curſednеſſe. [bleſſe,
Now, quod our Hoſte, Marchant, ſo God you
Sin ye ſo mochel knowen of that art,
Ful hertely I pray you tell us part.
Gladly, quod he, but of min owen ſore,
For ſory herte I tellen may no more.

THE MARCHANTES TALE *.

Whilom ther was dwelling in Lumbardie
A worthy knight, that born was at Pavie,
In which he lived in gret proſperitee;
And ſixty yere a wifles man was he,
And folwed ay his bodily delit
On women ther as was his appetit,
As don thiſe fooles that ben feculere.
And whan that he was paſſed ſixty yere,
Were it for holineſſe or for dotage
I cannot ſain, but ſwiche a gret corage
Hadde this knight to ben a wedded man,
That day and night he doth all that he can
To eſpien wher that he might wedded be,
Praying our Lord to graunten him that he
Mighte ones knowen of that bliſful lif
That is betwix an huſbond and his wif,
And for to live under that holy bond
With which God firſte man and woman bond.
Non other lif (ſaid he) is worth a bene;
For wedlok is ſo eſy and ſo clene
That in this world it is a paradiſe.
Thus ſaith this olde knight that was ſo wiſe.
And certainly, as ſoth as God is king,
To take a wif it is a glorious thing;
And namely whan a man is old and hore,
Than is a wif the fruit of his treſore;
Than ſhuld he take a yong wif and a faire,
On which he might engendren him an heire,
And lede his lif in joye and in ſolas,
Wheras thiſe bachelers ſingen alas!
Whan that they finde any adverſitee
In love, which n'is but childiſh vanitee.
And trewely it ſit wel to be ſo
That bachelers have often peine and wo.

* Old January marrieth young May, and for his unequal match receiveth a foul reward. *Urry.*

On brotel ground they bilde, and brotelneſſe
They finden whan they wenen ſikerneſſe:
They live but as a bird or as a beſte,
In libertee and under non areſte,
Ther as a wedded man in his eſtat
Liveth a lif blisful and ordinat,
Under the yoke of mariage ybound;
Wel may his herte in joye and bliſſe abound:
For who can be ſo buxom as a wif?
Who is ſo trewe and eke ſo ententif
To kepe him, ſike and hole, as is his make?
For wele or wo ſhe n'ill him not forſake;
She n'is not wery him to love and ſerve,
Though that he lie bedrede til that he ſterve.
And yet ſom clerkes ſain it is not ſo,
Of which he Theophraſt is on of tho.
What force though Theophraſt liſt for to lie?
Ne tak no wif, quod he, for huſbondrie,
As for to ſpare in houſhold thy diſpence:
A trewe ſervant doth more diligence
Thy good to kepe, than doth thin owen wif,
For ſhe wol claimen half part al hire lif.
And if that thou be ſike, ſo God me ſave,
Thy veray frendes or a trewe knave
Wol kepe thee bet than ſhe, that waiteth ay
After thy good, and hath don many a day.
This ſentence, and an hundred thinges werſe,
Writeth this man, ther God his bones curſe.
But take no kepe of all ſwiche vanitee;
Defieth Theophraſt, and herkeneth me.
A wif is Goddes yefte verayly;
All other maner yeftes hardely,
As londes, rentes, paſture, or commune,
Or mebles, all ben yeftes of Fortune,
That paſſen as a ſhadow on the wall:
But drede thou not if plainly ſpeke I ſhal;
A wif wol laſt and in thin hous endure
Wel lenger than thee liſt paraventure.
Mariage is a ful grete ſacrament;
He which that hath no wif I hold him ſhent;
He liveth helples and all deſolat:
(I ſpeke of folk in ſecular eſtat)
And herkneth why, I ſay not this for nought,
That woman is for mannes helpe ywrought:
The highe God, whan he had Adam maked,
And ſaw him al alone belly naked,
God of his grete goodneſſe ſaide than,
Let us now make an helpe unto this man
Like to himſelf, and than he made him Eve.
Here may ye ſee, and hereby may ye preve,
That a wif is mannes helpe and his comfort,
His paradis terreſtre, and his diſport:
So buxom and ſo vertuous is ſhe,
They moſten nedes live in unitee:
O fleſh they ben, and o fleſh, as I geſſe,
Hath but on herte in wele and in diſtreſſe.
A wif? a! Seinte Marie, *benedicite!*
How might a man have any adverſite
That hath a wif? certes I cannot ſeye.
The bliſſe the which that is betwix hem tweye
Ther may no tonge telle or herte thinke.
If he be poure, ſhe helpeth him to ſwinke;
She kepeth his good, and waſteth never a del;
All that hire huſbond doth, hire liketh wel:
She ſaith not ones, Nay, whan he ſaith, Ye:
Do this, ſaith he; Al redy, Sire, ſaith ſhe.
O bliſsful ordre, o wedlok precious!
Thou art ſo mery and eke ſo vertuous,
And ſo commended and approved eke,
That every man that holt him worth a leke,
Upon his bare knees ought all his lif
Thanken his God that him hath ſent a wif,
Or elles pray to God him for to ſend
A wif to laſt unto his lives end;
For than his lif is ſet in ſikerneſſe,
He may not be deceived, as I geſſe,
So tha he werche after his wives rede;
Than may he boldly beren up his hede,
They ben ſo trewe, and therwithal ſo wiſe;
For which, if thou wilt werchen as the wiſe,
Do alway ſo as women wol thee rede.
Lo how that Jacob, as thiſe clerkes rede,
By good conſeil of his mother Rebekke
Bounde the kiddes ſkin about his nekke,
For which his fadres benſon he wan.
Lo Judith, as the ſtorie eke tell can,
By good conſeil ſhe Goddes peple kept,
And ſlow him Holofernes while he ſlept.
Lo Abigail, by good conſeil how ſhe
Saved hire huſbond Nabal, whan that he
Shuld han be ſlain. And loke, Heſter alſo
By good conſell delivered out of wo
The peple of God, and made him Mardochee
Of Aſſuere enhanſed for to be.
Ther n'is no thing in gree ſuperlatif
(As ſaith Senek) above an humble wif.
Suffer thy wives tonge, as Caton bit;
She ſhal command and thou ſhalt ſuffren it,
And yet ſhe wol obey of curteſie.
A wif is keper of thin huſbondrie:
Wel may the ſike man bewaile and wepe
Ther as ther is no wif the hous to kepe.
I warne thee, if wiſely thou wilt werche,
Love wel thy wif, as Criſt loveth his cherche:
If thou loveſt thyſelf, love thou thy wif.
No man hateth his fleſh, but in his lif
He foſtreth it, and therfore bid I thee
Cheriſh thy wif, or thou ſhalt never the.
Huſbond and wif, what ſo men jape or play,
Of worldly folk holden the ſiker way:
They ben ſo knit ther may non harm betide,
And namely upon the wives ſide.
For which this January, of whom I told,
Conſidered hath within his dayes old
The luſty lif, the vertuous quiete,
That is in mariage honey-ſwete,
And for his frendes on a day he ſent
To tellen hem th' effect of his entent.
With face ſad his tale he hath hem told:
He ſayde, Frendes, I am hore and old,
And almoſt (God wot) on my pittes brinke,
Upon my ſoule ſomwhat moſt I thinke.
I have my body folily diſpended,
Bleſſed be God that it ſhall ben amended!
For I wol ben certain a wedded man,
And that anon in all the haſt I can.
Unto ſom maiden, faire and tendre of age,
I pray you ſhapeth for my mariage

All ſodenly, for I wol not abide;
And I wol fonde to eſpien on my ſide
To whom I may be wedded haſtily.
But for as moche as ye ben more than I,
Ye ſhullen rather ſwiche a thinge eſpien
Than I, and wher me beſte were to allien.
But o thing warn I you, my frendes dere;
I wol non olde wif han in no manere;
She ſhal not paſſen twenty yere certain:
Old fiſh and yonge fleſh wold I have fain.
Bet is (quod he) a pike than a pikerel,
And bet than old beef is the tendre veel.
I wol no woman thirty yere of age;
It is but beneſtraw and gret forage.
And eke thiſe olde widewes (God it wote)
They connen ſo moch craft on Wades bote,
So mochel broken harm whan that hem leſt,
That with hem ſhuld I never live in reſt.
For ſondry ſcoles maken ſubtil clerkes;
Woman of many ſcoles half a clerk is.
But certainly a yong thing men may gie,
Right as men may warm wax with handes plie;
Wherfore I ſay you plainly in a clauſe
I wol non old wif han right for this cauſe.
For if ſo were I hadde ſwiche meſchance,
That I in hire ne coude have no pleſance,
Than ſhuld I lede my lif in avoutrie,
And ſo ſtreight to the devil whan I die.
Ne children ſhuld I non upon hire geten;
Yet were me lever houndes had me eten
Than that min heritage ſhulde fall
In ſtraunge hondes; and this I tell you all,
I dote not, I wot the cauſe why
Men ſhulden wedde; and furthermore wot I
Ther ſpeketh many a man of mariage
That wot no more of it than wot my page
For which cauſes a man ſhuld take a wif.
If he may not liven chaſt his lif,
Take him a wif with gret devotion,
Becauſe of leful procreation
Of children, to the honour of God above;
And not only for paramour or love,
And for they ſhulden lecherie eſchue,
And yielde hir dette whan that it is due,
Or for that eche of hem ſhuld helpen other
In meſchefe; as a ſuſter ſhal the brother,
And live in chaſtitee ful holily.
But, Sires, (by your leve) than am not I,
For, God be thanked, I dare make avaunt,
I fele my limmes ſtark and ſuffiſant
To don all that a man belongeth to:
I wot myſelven beſt what I may do.
Though I be hoor, I fare as doth a tre
That bloſmeth er the fruit ywoxen be;
The bloſmy tre n'is neither drie ne ded:
I fele me no wher hoor but on my hed:
Min herte and all my limmes ben as grene
As laurer thurgh the yere is for to ſene.
And ſin that ye han herd all min entent,
I pray you to my will ye wolde aſſent.
Diverſe men diverſely him told
Of mariage many enſamples old;
Som blamed it, ſom praiſed it certain:
But atte laſte, ſhortly for to ſain,
(As all day falleth altercatiòn
Betwixen frendes and diſputiſon)
Ther fell a ſtrif betwix his brethren two,
Of which that on was cleped Placebo,
Juſtinus ſothly called was that other.
Placebo ſayd, O January! brother,
Ful litel nede han ye, my lord ſo dere,
Conſeil to aſke of any that is here,
But that ye ben ſo ful of ſapience
That you ne liketh for your high prudence
To weiven fro the word of Salomon;
This word, ſayd he, unto us everich on,
Werke alle thing by conſeil, thus ſayd he,
And than ne ſhalt thou not repenten thee.
But though that Salomon ſpake ſwiche a word,
Min owen dere brother and my lord,
So wiſly God my ſoule bringe at reſt,
I hold your owen conſeil is the beſt.
For, brother min, take of me this motif,
I have now ben a court-man all my lif,
And God it wot, though I unworthy be,
I have ſtonden in ful gret degree
Abouten lordes of ful high eſtat,
Yet had I never with non of hem debat;
I never hem contraried trewely.
I wot wel that my lord can more than I;
What that he ſaith I holde it firme and ſtable;
I ſay the ſame, or elles thing ſemblable.
A ful gret fool is any conſeillour,
That ſerveth any lord of high honour,
That dare preſume, or ones thinken it,
That his conſeil ſhuld paſſe his lordes wit;
Nay, lordes be no fooles by my fay.
Ye han yourſelven ſhewed here to-day
So high ſentence, ſo holily, and wel,
That I conſent, and confirme every del
Your wordes all, and your opiniouu.
By God ther n'is no man in all this toun,
Ne in Itaille, coud bet han yſayd:
Criſt holt him of this conſeil wel appaid.
And trewely it is an high corage
Of any man that ſtopen is in age
To take a young wif: by my fader kin
Your herte hongeth on a joly pin.
Doth now in this matere right as you leſt,
For finally I hold it for the beſt.
Juſtinus, that ay ſtille ſat and herd,
Right in this wiſe he to Placebo anſwerd;
Now, brother min, be patient I pray,
Sin ye han ſaid, and herkneth what I ſay.
Senek, among his other wordes wiſe,
Saith that a man ought him right wel aviſe
To whom he yeveth his lond or his catel:
And ſith I ought aviſen me right wel
To wh m I yeve my good away fro me,
Wel more I ought aviſen me, parde,
To whom I yeve my body; for alway
I warne you wel it is no childes play
To take a wif without aviſement.
Men muſt enqueren (this is min aſſent)
Wheder ſhe be wiſe and ſobre or dronkelewe,
Or proud, or elles other waies a ſhrew,

A chideſter, or a waſtour of thy good,
Or riche or poure, or elles a man is wood:
Al be it ſo that no man finden ſhal
Non in this world that trotteth hol in al,
Ne man̄e beſte, ſwiche as men can deviſe,
But natheles it ought ynough ſuffice
With any wif, if ſo were that ſhe had
Mo good thewes than hire vices bad:
And all this axeth leiſure to enquere;
For God it wot I have wept many a tere
Ful prively ſin that I had a wif.
Praiſe who ſo wol a wedded mannes lif,
Certain I find in it but coſt and care,
And obſervances of alle bliſſes bare;
And yet, God wot, my neighebours aboute,
And namely of women many a route,
Sain that I have the moſte ſhedefaſt wif,
And eke the mekeſt on, that bereth lif:
But I wot beſt wher wringeth me my ſho.
Ye may for me right as you liketh do.
Aviſeth you, ye ben a man of age,
How that ye entren into mariage,
And namely with a yong wif and a faire.
By him that made water, fire, erth, and aire,
The yongeſt man that is in all this route
Is beſy ynow to bringen it aboute
To han his wif alone, truſteth me:
Ye ſhul not pleſen hire fully yeres three;
This is to ſain, to don hire ful pleſance:
A wif axeth ful many an obſervance.
I pray you that ye be not evil appaid.
Wel, quod this January, and haſt thou ſaide?
Straw for Senek, and ſtraw for thy proverbes;
I counte not a panier ful of herbes
Of ſcole termes: wiſer men than thou,
As thou haſt herd, aſſented here right now
To my purpos. Placebo, what ſaye ye?
I ſaye it is a curſed man, quod he,
That letteth matrimoine ſikerly.
And with that word they riſen ſodenly,
And ben aſſented fully that he ſholde
Be wedded whan him liſt and wher he wolde.
High fantaſie and curious beſineſſe
Fro day to day gan in the ſoule empreſſe
Of January about his mariage:
Many a faire ſhap and many a faire viſage
Ther paſſeth thurgh his herte night by night.
As who ſo toke a mirrour poliſhed bright,
And ſet it in a comune market place,
Then ſhuld he ſee many a figure pace
By his mirrour, and in the ſame wiſe
Gan January in with his thoughte deviſe
Of maidens which that dweken him beſide;
He wiſte not wher that he might abide;
For if that on have beautee in hire face,
Another ſtont ſo in the peples grace,
For hire ſadneſſe and hire benignitee,
That of the peple the greteſt vois hath ſhe:
And ſom were riche and hadden a bad name;
But natheles, betwix erneſt and game,
He at the laſt appointed him on on,
And let all other from his herte gon,
And chees hire of his owen auctoritee,
For love is blind all day and may not ſee.
And whan that he was in his bed yebrought,
He purtreied in his herte and in his thought
Hire freſhe beautee and hire age tendre,
Hire middel ſmal, hire armes long and ſclendre,
Hire wiſe governance, hire gentilleſſe,
Hire womanly bering, and hire ſadneſſe.
And whan that he on hire was condeſcended,
Him thought his choiſe it might not ben amended;
For whan that he himſelf concluded had,
Him thought eche other mannes wit ſo bad,
That impoſſible it were to replie
Again his choiſe: this was his fantaſie.
His frendes ſent he to, at his inſtance,
And praied hem to don him that pleſance
That hastily they wolden to him come;
He wolde abregge hir labour all and ſome:
Neded no more to hem to go ne ride,
He was appointed ther he wolde abide.
Placebo came, and eke his frendes ſone,
And alderfirſt he bade hem all a bone,
That non of hem non argumentes make
Again the purpos that he hath ytake;
Which purpos was pleſant to God (ſaid he)
And veray ground of his proſperitee.
He ſaid ther was a maiden in the toun
Which that of beautee hadde gret renoun,
Al were it ſo ſhe were of final degree;
Sufficeth him hire youth and hire beautee;
Which maid (he ſaid) he wold han to his wif,
To lede in eſe and holineſſe his lif;
And thanked God that he might han hire all,
That no wight with his bliſſe parten ſhall;
And praied hem to labour in this nede,
And ſhapen that he faille not to ſpede:
For than, he ſayd, his ſpirit was at eſe;
Than is (quod he) nothing may me diſpleſe,
Save o thing pricketh in my conſcience,
The which I wol reharſe in your preſence.
I have (quod he) herd ſaid ful yore ago,
Ther may no man han parfite bliſſes two,
This is to ſay, in erthe and eke in heven;
For though he kepe him fro the ſinnes ſeven,
And eke from every branch of thilke tree,
Yet is ther ſo parfit felicitee,
And ſo grete eſe and luſt, in mariage,
That ever I am agaſt, now in min age,
That I ſhal leden now ſo mery a lif,
So delicat, withouten wo or ſtrif,
That I ſhal han min heven in erthe here;
For ſin that veray heven is bought ſo dere,
With tribulation and gret penance,
How ſhuld I than, living in ſwiche pleſance
As alle wedded men don with his wives,
Come to the bliſſe ther Criſt eterne on live is?
This is my drede, and ye, my brethren tweie,
Aſſoileth me this queſtion I preie.
Juſtinus, which that hated his folie,
Anſwerd anon right in his japerie,
And for he wold his long tale abrege,
He wolde non auctoritee allege,
But ſayde, Sire, ſo ther be non obſtacle
Other than this, God of his hie miracle,
And of his mercy, may ſo for you werche,
That er ye have your rights of holy cherche

Ye may repent of wedded mannes lif,
In which ye fain ther is no wo ne ſtrif;
And elles God forbede but if he ſent
A wedded man his grace him to repent
Wel often, rather than a ſingle man:
And therefore, Sire, the beſt rede that I can,
Deſpeire you not, but haveth in memorie
Paravenure ſhe may be your Purgatorie;
She may be Goddes mene and Goddes whippe,
Than ſhal your ſoule up unto heven ſkippe
Swifter than doth an arow of a bow.
I hope to God hereafter ye ſhal know
That ther n'is non ſo gret felicitee
In mariage, ne never more ſhall be,
That you ſhal let of your ſalvation,
So that ye uſe, as ſkill is and reſon,
The luſtes of your wif attemprely,
And that ye pleſe hire nat to amorously,
And that ye kepe you eke from other ſinne.
My Tale is don, for my wit is but thinne.
Beth not agaſt hereof, my brother dere,
But let us waden out of this matere.
The Wif of Bathe, if ye han underſtond,
Of mariage, which ye now han in hond,
Declared hath ful wel in litel ſpace.
Fareth now wel, God have you in his grace!

And with this word this Juſtine and his brother
Han take hir leve, and eche of hem of other.
And when they ſaw that it muſt nedes be,
They wroughten ſo by ſleighte and wiſe tretee
That ſhe this maiden, which that Maius hight,
As haſtily as ever that ſhe might,
Shal wedded be unto this January.
I trow it were to longe you to tary,
If I you told of every ſcript and bond
By which that ſhe was feoffed in this lond,
Or for to rekken of hire rich array.
But, finally, ycomen is the day
That to the chirche both hen they went
For to receive the holy ſacrament.
Forth cometh the preeſt, with ſtole about his nekke,
And bade hire be like Sara and Rebekke
In wiſdome and in trouthe of mariage;
And ſayd his oriſons, as is uſage,
And crouched hem, and bade God ſhuld hem bleſſe,
And made all ſiker ynow with holineſſe.

Thus ben they wedded with ſolempnitee;
And at the feſte ſitteth he and ſhe,
With other worthy folk, upon the deis.
Al ful of joye and bliſſe is the paleis,
And ful of inſtruments, and of vitaille
The moſte deinteous of all Italille.
Beforn hem ſtood ſwiche inſtruments of ſoun
That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphion,
Ne maden never ſwiche a melodie:
At every cours in came lond minſtralcie,
That never Joab tromped for to here,
Ne he Theodomas yet half ſo clere
At Thebes whan the citee was in doute.
Bacchus the win him ſkinketh all aboute,
And Venus laugheth upon every wight,
(For January was become hire knight,
And wolde both aſſaien his corage
In hibertee and eke in mariage)
And with hire firebrond in hire hond aboute
Danceth before the bride and all the roupe.
And certainly I dare right wel ſay this,
Ymeneus, that god of Wedding is,
Saw never his lif ſo mery a wedded man.

Hold thou thy pees, thou poet Marcian,
That writeſt us that ilke wedding mery
Of hire Philologie and him Mercurie,
And of the ſonges that the Muſes ſonge;
To ſmal is both thy pen and eke thy tonge
For to deſcriven of this mariage.
Whan tendre Youth hath wedded ſtouping Age,
Ther is ſwiche mirth that it may not be writen:
Aſſaieth it yourſelf, than may ye witen
If that I lie or non in this matere.

Maius, that ſit with ſo benigne a chere,
Hire to behold it ſemed Faerie.
Quene Heſter loked never with ſwiche an eye
On Aſſuere, ſo meke a look hath ſhe.
I may you not deviſe all hire beautee;
But this moch of hire beautee tell I may,
That ſhe was like the brighte morwe of May,
Fulfilled of all beautee and pleſance.

This January is raviſhed in a trance
At every time he loketh in hire face;
But in his herte he gan hire to manace
That he that night in armes wold hire ſtreine
Harder than ever Paris did Haleine.
But nathelea yet had he gret pitee
That thilke night offenden hire muſt he,
And thought, alas! o tendre creature!
Now wolde God ye mighten wel endure
All my corage; it is ſo ſharpe and kene
I am agaſt ye ſhal it nat ſuſtene!
But God forbode that I did all my might!
Now wolde God that it were waxen night,
And that the night wold laſten ever mo!
I wold that all this peple were ago!
And, finally, he doth all his labour,
As he beſt mighte, ſaving his honour,
To heſte him fro the mete in ſubtil wiſe.

The time came that reſon was to riſe,
And after that men dance and drinken faſt,
And ſpices all about the hous they caſt,
And ful of joye and bliſſe is every man,
All but a ſquier that highte Damian,
Which carf beforn the knight ful many a day;
He was ſo raviſht on his Lady May,
That for the veray peine he was nie wood;
Almoſt he ſwelt, and ſwouned ther he ſtood:
So ſore hath Venus hurt him with hire brond
As that ſhe bare it dancing in hire hond;
And to his bed he went him haſtily:
No more of him as at this time ſpeke I.
But ther I let him wepe ynow and plaine,
Til freſhe May wol rewen on his peine.

O perilous fire that in the bedſtraw bredeth!
O famuler ſo that his ſervice bedeth!
O ſervant traitor, falſe of holy hewe,
Like to the nedder in boſom flie untrewe,
God ſhelde us alle from your acquaintance!
O January! dronken in pleſance
Of mariage, ſee how thy Damian,
Thin owen ſquier and thy boren man

With which whan that him liſt he it unſhette;
And whan that he wold pay his wives dette
In ſomer ſeſon thider wold he go,
And May his wif, and no wight but they two;
And thinges which that were not don a-bedde
He in the gardin parfourmed hem, and ſpedde.
And in this wiſe many a mery day
Lived this January and freſhe May:
But worldly joye may not alway endure
To January ne to no creature.
O ſoden hap, o thou Fortune unſtable!
Like to the ſcorpion ſo deceivable,
That flatreſt with thy hed whan thou wolt ſting;
Thy tayl is deth thurgh thin eveniming.
O brotel joye! o ſwete poyſon queinte!
O monſtre! that ſo ſotilly canſt peinte
Thy giftes under hewe of ſtedfaſtneſſe,
That thou deceiveſt bothe more and leſſe,
Why haſt thou January thus deceived,
That haddeſt him for thy ful frend received?
And now thou haſt beraft him both his eyen,
For ſorwe of which deſireth he to dyen.
Alas! this nohle January, free,
Amidde his luſt and his proſperitee,
Is waxen blind, and that al ſodenly.
He wepeth and he waileth pitouſly,
And therwithall the fire of jalouſie
(Leſt that his wif ſhuld fall in ſom folie)
So brent his herte that he wolde fain
That ſom man had both him and hire yſlain;
For nother after his deth ne in his lif
Ne wold he that ſhe were no love ne wif,
But ever live as a widewe in clothes blake,
Sole as the turtle that hath loſt hire make.
But at the laſt, after a moneth or tway,
His ſorwe gan aſſwagen, ſoth to ſay;
For whan he wiſt it might non other be,
He patiently toke his adverſitee;
Save out of doute he ne may nat forgon
That he n'as jalous ever more in on;
Which jalouſie it was ſo outrageous,
That neither in halle, ne in non other hous,
Ne in non other place never the mo,
He n'olde ſuffre hire for to ride or go
But if that he had honde on hire alway;
For which ful often wepeth freſhe May,
That loveth Damian ſo brenningly,
That ſhe moſte either dien ſodenly
Or elles ſhe moſte han him as hire leſt:
She waited whan hire herte wold to-breſt.
Upon that other ſide Damian
Becomen is the ſorwefulleſt man
That ever was, for neither night ne day
Ne might he ſpeke a word to freſhe May,
As to his purpos, of no ſwiche matere,
But if that January muſt it here,
That had an hand upon hire evermo;
But natheles by writing to and fro,
And privee ſignes, wiſt he what ſhe ment,
And ſhe knew eke the ſin of his entent.
O January! what might it thee availe
Though thou might ſeen as fer as ſhippes ſaile?
For as good as blind to deceived be
As be deceived whan a man may ſee.
Lo Argus, which that had an hundred eyen,
For all that ever he coude pore or prien,
Yet was he blent, and, God wot, ſo ben mo,
That wenen wisly that it be not ſo.
Paſſe over is an eſe; I ſay no more.
This freſhe May, of which I ſpake of yore,
In warm wex hath enprented the cliket
That January bare of the ſmal wiket,
By which into his gardin oft he went,
And Damian, that knew all hire entent,
The cliket contrefeted prively:
Ther n'is no more to ſay, but haſtily
Som wonder by this cliket ſhal betide,
Which ye ſhul heren if ye wol abide.
O noble Ovide! ſoth ſayeſt thou, God wote,
What ſleight is it, if Love be long and hote,
That he n'ill find it out in ſom manere?
By Pyramus and Thiſbe may men lere;
Though they were kept ful long and ſtreit over all,
They ben accorded, rowning thurgh a wall,
Ther no wight coude han founden ſwiche a ſleighte.
But now to purpos. Er that daies eighte
Were paſſed of the month of Juil, befill
That January hath caught ſo gret a will,
Thurgh egging of his wif, him for to play
In his gardin, and no wight but they tway,
That in a morwe unto this May ſaid he,
Riſe up, my wif, my love, my lady free!
The turtles vois is herd, myn owen ſwete!
The winter is gon, with all his raines wete.
Come forth now with thin eyen columbine;
Wel fairer ben thy breſts than ony wine.
The gardin is enclоſed all aboute;
Come forth, my white ſpouſe, for out of doute
Thou haſt me wounded in myn herte, o wif!
No ſpot in thee n'as never in all thy lif.
Come forth, and let us taken our diſport;
I cheſe thee for my wif and my comfort.
Swiche olde lewed wordes uſed he.
On Damian a ſigne made ſhe,
That he ſhuld go before with his cliket.
This Damian hath opened the wiket,
And in he ſtert, and that in ſwiche manere
That no wight might him ſee neyther yhere,
And ſtill he ſit under a buſh. Anon
This January, as blind as is a ſton,
With Maius in his hand, and no wight mo,
Into this freſhe gardin is ago,
And clappet to the wiket ſodenly.
Now wif, quod he, here n'is but thou and I,
That art the creature that I beſt love;
For by that Lord that ſit in heven above
I hadde lever dien on a knif
Than thee offenden, dere trewe wif.
For Geddes ſake thinke how I thee chees,
Not for no covetiſe douteles,
But only for the love I had to thee.
And though that I be old and may not ſee,
Beth to me trewe, and I wol tell you why;
Certes three thinges ſhal ye win therby;
Firſt love of Criſt, and to yourſelf honour,
And all min heritage, toun and tour;
I yeve it you, maketh chartres as you leſt;
This ſhal be don to-morwe er ſonne reſt,

So willy God my ſoule bring to bliſſe:
I pray you on this covenant ye me kiſſe
And though that I be jalous wite me nought;
Ye ben ſo depe enprented in my thought,
That whan that I conſider your beautee,
And therwithall the unlikely chie of me,
I may not certes, though I ſhulde die,
Forbere to ben out of your compagnie
For veray lowe; this is withouten doute:
Now kiſſe me, wif, and let us rome aboute.

This freſhe May, whan ſhe thiſe wordes herd,
Benignely to January anſwerd,
But firſt and forward ſhe began to wepe:
I have, quod ſhe, a ſoule for to kepe
As wel as ye, and alſo min honour,
And of my wifhood, thilke tendre flour
Which that I have aſſured in your hond,
Whan that the preeſt to you my body bond,
Wherfore I wol anſwere in this manere,
With leve of you, myn owen lord ſo dere.

I pray to God that never daw that day
That I me ſtarve, as ſoule as woman may,
If ever I do unto my kin that ſhame,
Or elles I empeire ſo my name
That I be falſe; and if I do that lakke,
Do ſtripen me and put me in a ſakke,
And in the nexte river do me drenche:
I am a gentil woman and no wenche.
Why ſpeke ye thus? but men ben ever untrewe,
And wommen han repreſe of you ay newe.
Ye com non other daliance, I leve,
But ſpeke to us as of untruſt and repreve.

And with that word ſhe ſaw wher Damian
Sat in the buſh, and conghen ſhe began;
And with hire finger a ſigne made ſhe
That Damian ſhulde clomb up on a tre
That charged was with fruit, and up he went;
For verailly he knew all hire entent,
And every ſigne that ſhe coude make,
Wel bet than January her own make;
For in a lettre ſhe had told him all
Of this matere, how that he werken ſhall,
And thus I let him ſitting in the pery,
And January and May roming ful mery.

Bright was the day, and blew the firmament;
Phebus of gold his ſtremes doun hath ſent
To gladen every flour with his warmneſſe;
He was that time in Geminis I geſſe,
But litel fro his declination
Of Cancer, Joves exaltation.
And ſo befell in that bright morwe tide,
That in the gardin, on the ferther ſide,
Pluto that is the King of Faerie,
And many a ladie in his compagnie
Folwing his wif, the Quene Proſerpina,
Which that he ravished out of Ethna,
While that ſhe gadred flowres in the mede,
(In Claudian ye may the ſtory rede,
How that hire in his griſely carte he ſette)
This King of Faerie adoun him ſette
Upon a benche of turves freſhe and grene,
And right anon thus ſaid he to his quene:

My wif, quod he, ther may no wight ſay nay,
The experience ſo preveth it every day,
The treſon which that woman doth to man:
Ten hundred thouſand ſtories tell I can
Notable of your untrouth and brotelneſſe.
O Salomon! richeſt of all richeſſe,
Fulfilled of ſapience and wordly glorie,
Ful worthy ben thy wordes to memorie
To every wight that wit and reſon can.
Thus praiſeth he the hountee yet of man;
Among a thouſand men yet fond I on,
But of all women fond I never non.
Thus ſaith this king, that knewe your wikkednesſe:
And Jeſus, *filius* Sirach, as I geſſe,
He ſpeketh of you but ſelden reverence,
A wilde fire, a corrupt peſtilence,
So fall upon your bodies yet to-night.
Ne ſee ye not this honourable knight?
Becauſe, alas! that he is blind and old
His owen man ſhal make him cokewold:
Lo wher he ſit, the lechour, in the tree.
Now wol I graunten of my majeſtee
Unto this olde blinde worthy knight,
That he ſhal have again his eyen light,
Whan that his wif wol don him vilanie,
Than ſhal he knowen all hire harlotrie,
Both in repreſe of hire and other mo.

Ye, Sire, quod Proſerpine, and wol ye ſo?
Now by my modre Ceres ſoule I ſwere
That I ſhal yeve hire ſufficant anſwere,
And alle women after for hire ſake,
That though they ben in any gilt ytake,
With face bold they ſhul hemſelve excuſe,
And bere hem doun that wolden hem accuſe:
For lacke of anſwere non of us ſhul dien.
Al had ye ſeen a thing with both your eyen,
Yet ſhul we ſo viſage it hardely,
And wepe, and ſweare, and chiden, ſubtilly,
That ye ſhul hen as lewed as ben goes.
What rekketh me of your auctoritees?
I wote wel that this Jewe, this Salomon,
Fond of us women foole many on:
But though that he ne fond no good woman,
Ther hath yſonden many an other man
Women ful good, and trewe and vertuous,
Witneſſe on hem that dwelte in Criſtes hous;
With martyrdom they preved hir conſtance.
The Roman geſtes maken remembrance
Of many a veray trewe wif alſo.
But, Sire, be he not wroth al be it ſo,
Though that he ſaid he fond no good woman,
I pray you take the ſentence of the man:
He ment thus, that in ſoverein hountee
N'is non but God, no, neuther he ne ſhe.

Ey, for the veray God that n'is but on,
What maken ye ſo meche of Salomon?
What though he made a temple, Goddes hous?
What though he were riche and glorious?
So made he eke a temple of falſe goddes;
How might he don a thing that more forbode is?
Parde as faire as ye his name emplaſtre,
He was a lechour and an idolaſtre,
And in his elde he veray God forſoke;
And if that God ne hadde (as faithe the boke)
Spared him for his fathers ſake, he ſholde
Han loſt his regne rather than he wolde.

I ſete nat of all the vilanie
That he of women wrote a boterflie.
I am a woman; nedes moſte I ſpeke,
Or ſwell unto that time min herte breke:
For ſin he ſaid that we ben janglereſſes,
As ever mote I brouken hole my treſſes,
I ſhal nat ſparen for no curteſie
To ſpeke him harm that ſayth us vilanie.
Dame, quod this Pluto, be no lenger wroth,
I yeve it up: but ſin I ſwore min oth,
That I wold graunten him his ſight again,
My word ſhal ſtand, that warne I you certain:
I am a king, it fit me not to lie.
And I, quod ſhe, am Quene of Faerie.
Hire anſwere ſhe ſhal han I undertake;
Let us no more wordes of it make.
Forſoth, quod he, I wol you not contrary.
Now let us turn again to January,
That in the gardin with his faire May
Singeth wel merier than the popingay;
You love I beſt, and ſhal, and other non.
So long about the alleyes is he gon,
Til he was comen again to thilke pery
Wher as this Damian ſitteth ful mery
On high, among the freſhe leves grene.
This freſhe May, that is ſo bright and ſhene,
Gan for to ſike, and ſaid, Alas, my ſide!
Now, Sire, quod ſhe, for ought that may betide,
I moſte have of the peres that I ſee,
Or I moſte die, ſo ſore longeth me
To eten of the ſmale peres grene;
Help for hire love that is of heven quene.
I tell you wel a woman in my plit
May have to fruit ſo gret an appetit,
That ſhe may dien but ſhe of it have.
Alas! quod he, that I n'adde here a knave
That coude climbe: alas! alas! quod he)
For I am blinde. Ye, Sire, no force, quod ſhe;
But wold ye vouchefauf, for Goddes ſake,
The pery in with your armes for to take,
(For wel I wot that ye miſtruſten me)
Than wold I climben wel ynough; (quod ſhe)
So I my fote might ſetten on your back.
Certes, ſaid he, therin ſhal be no lack,
Might I you helpen with min herte blood.
He ſtoupeth doun, and on his back ſhe ſtood,
And caught hire by a twiſt; and up ſhe goth.
(Ladies, I pray you that ye be not wroth;
I can nat gloſe; I am a rude man:)
And ſodenly anon this Damian
Gan pullen up the ſmock, and in he throng.
And whan that Pluto ſaw this grete wrong,
To January he yaf again his ſight,
And made him ſee as wel as ever he might;
And whan he thus had caught his ſight again
Ne was ther never man of thing ſo fain:
But on his wif his thought was ever mo.
Up to the tree he caſt his eyen two,
And ſaw how Damian his wife had dreſſed
In ſwiche manere it may not ben expreſſed,
But if I wolde ſpeke uncurteiſly;
And up he yaf a roring and a cry,
As doth the mother whan the child ſhal die:
Out! helpe! alas! harow! he gan to cry;
O ſtronge lady ſtore, what doeſt thou?
And ſhe anſwered, Sire, what aileth you?
Have patience and reſon in your minde,
I have you holpen on both your eyen blinde.
Up peril of my ſoule, I ſhal nat lien,
As me was taught to helpen with your eyen
Was nothing better for to make you ſee
Than ſtrogle with a man upon a tree:
God wot, I did it in ful good entent.
Strogle! quod he; ye, algate in it went.
Gode yeve you both on ſhames deth to dien;
He ſwived thee, I ſaw it with min eyen,
And elles be I honged by the halſe.
Than is, quod ſhe, my medicine al falſe;
For certainly if that ye mighten ſee,
Ye wold not ſay thiſe wordes unto me.
Ye have ſom glimſing, and no parfit ſight.
I ſee, quod he, as wel as ever I might
(Thanked be God) with both min eyen two,
And by my feith me thought he did thee ſo.
Ye maſe, ye maſen, good Sire, quod ſhe;
This thank have I for I have made you ſee:
Alas! quod ſhe, that ever I was ſo kind.
Now Dame, quod he, let al paſſe out of mind:
Come doun, my lefe, and if I have miſſaid,
God helpe me ſo as I am evil appaid:
But by my fadres ſoule I wende have ſein
How that this Damian had by thee lein,
And that thy ſmock had lein upon his breſt.
Ye, Sire, quod ſhe, ye may wene as you leſt:
But, Sire, a man that weketh of his ſlepe,
He may not ſodenly wel taken kepe
Upon a thing, ne ſeen it parfitly,
Til that he be adawed verailly:
Right ſo a man that lang hath blind ybe,
He may not ſodenly ſo wel yſee,
Firſt whan his ſight is newe comen agein,
As he that hath a day or two yſein.
Til that your ſight yſateled be a while,
Ther may ful many a fighte you begile.
Beware, I pray you, for by heven King
Ful many a man weneth to ſee a thing,
And it is all another than it ſemeth:
He which that miſconceiveth oft miſdemeth.
And with that word ſhe lep doun fro the tree.
This January who is glad but he?
He kiſſeth hire and clippeth hire ful oft,
And on hire wombe he ſtroketh hire ful ſoft,
And to his paleis home he hath hire lad.
Now, goode men, I pray you to be glad.
Thus endeth here my Tale of Januarie;
God bleſſe us, and his moder Seinte Marie!

THE SQUIERES PROLOGUE.

By Goddes mercy, ſayde oure Hoſte tho,
Now ſwiche a wif I preie God kepe me fro.
Lo, ſwiche ſleightes and ſubtilitees
In women ben; for ay as beſy as bees
Ben they us ſely men for to deceive,
And from a ſothe wol they ever weive:
By this Marchantes Tale it preveth wel.
But natheles, as trewe as any ſtele
I have a wif, though that ſhe poure be,
But of hire tonge a labbing ſhrewe is ſhe;
And yet ſhe hath an hepe of vices mo.
Therof no force; let all ſwiche thinges go.
But wete ye what? in conſeil be it ſeyde,
Me reweth ſore I am unto hire teyde;
For and I ſhulde rekene every vice
Which that ſhe hath; ywis I were to nice;
And cauſe why, it ſhulde reported be
And told to hire of ſom of this compagnie,
(Of whom it nedeth not for to declare,
Sin women connen utter ſwiche chaffare)
And eke my wit ſufficeth not therto
To tellen all; wherfore my Tale is do.
Squier, come ner, if it youre wille be,
And ſay ſomwhat of love, for certes ye
Connen theron as moche as any man.
Nay, Sire, quod he, but ſwiche thing as I can
With hertly wille, for I wol not rebelle
Agein your luſt, a Tale wol I telle.
Have me excuſed if I ſpeke amis:
My wille is good; and lo, my Tale is this.

THE SQUIERES TALE *.

At Sarra, in the lond of Tartarie,
Ther dwelt a king that werreied Ruſſie,
Thurgh which ther died many a doughty man.
This noble king was cleped Cambuſcan,
Which in his time was of ſo gret renoun,
That ther n'as no wher in no regioun
So excellent a lorde in alle thing;
Him lacked nought that longeth to a king,
As of the ſecte of which that he was borne.
He kept his lay to which he was yſworne,
And therto he was hardy, wiſe, and riche,
And pitous and juſt, and alway yliche,
Trewe of his word, benigne and honourable,
Of his corage as any centre ſtable,
Yong, freſh, and ſtrong, in armes deſirous,
As any bacheler of all his hous.
A faire perſon he was and fortunate,
And kept alway ſo wel real eſtat,

* The King of Araba ſendith to Cambuſcan King of Sarra a horſe and a ſword of rare qualite, and to his daughter Canace a glaſs and a ring, by the virtue whereof ſhe underſtandeth the language of all fowles. Much of this Tale is either loſt or elſe never finiſhed by Chaucer. *Urry.*

That ther n'as no wher ſwiche another man.
This noble king, this Tartre Cambuſcan,
Hadde two ſones by Elfeta his wif,
Of which the eldeſt ſone highte Algarſif,
That other was ycleped Camballo.
A doughter had this worthy king alſo,
That yongeſt was, and highte Canace:
But for to tellen you all hire beautee
It lith not in my tonge ne in my conning;
I dare not undertake ſo high a thing:
Min Engliſh eke is inſufficient;
It muſte ben a rethor excellent,
That coude his colours longing for that art,
If he ſhuld hire deſcriven ony part:
I am non ſwiche; I mote ſpeke as I can.
And ſo befel that whan this Cambuſcan
Hath twenty winter borne his diademe,
As he was wont fro yere to yere I deme,
He let the feſte of his nativitee
Don crien thurghout Sarra his citee
The laſt idus of March after the yere.
Phebus the ſonne ful jolif was and clere,
Fer he was nigh his exaltation
In Martes face, and in his mancion
In Aries, the colerike hote ſigne:
Ful luſty was the wether and benigne,
For which the foules again the ſonne ſheene:
What for the ſeſon and the yonge grene
Ful londe ſongen hir affections:
Hem ſemed han geten hem protections
Again the ſwerd of winter kene and cold.
This Cambuſcan, of which I have you told,
In real veſtiments, ſit on his deis
With diademe, ful high in paleis,
And holt his feſte ſo ſolempne and ſo riche,
That in this world ne was ther non it liche,
Of which if I ſhall tellen all the array,
Than wold it occupie a ſomers day;
And eke it nedeth not for to deviſe
At every cours the order of hir ſervice:
I wol not tellen of hir ſtrange ſewes,
Ne of hir ſwannes ne hir heronſewes:
Eke in that lond, as tellen knightes old,
Ther is ſom mete that is ful deintee hold,
That in his lond men recche of it ful ſmal:
Ther n'is no man that may reporten al.
I wol not tarien you, for it is priche,
And for it is no fruit, but loſſe of time;
Unto my purpos I wol have recours.
And ſo befelle, that after the thridde cours,
While that this king ſit thus in his nobley,
Herking his miniſtralles hir thinges pley,
Beforne him at his bord deliciouſly,
In at the halle dore al ſodenly
Ther came a knight upon a ſtede of bras,
And in his hond a brod mirrour of glas;
Upon his thombe he had of gold a ring,
And by his ſide a naked ſwerd hanging;
And up he rideth to the highe bord.
In all the halle ne was ther ſpoke a word
For mervaille of this knight; him to behold
Ful beſily they waiten yong and old.
This ſtrange knight that come this ſodenly,
Al armed ſave his hed ful richely,
Salueth king and quene, and lordes alle,
By order as they ſaten in the halle,
With ſo high reverence and obſervance,
As wel in ſpeche as in his contenance,
That Gawain with his olde curteſie,
Though he were come agen out of Faerie,
Ne coude him not amenden with a word:
And after this beforn the highe bord
He with a manly vois ſayd his meſſage,
After the forme uſed in his langage,
Withouten vice of ſillable or of letter:
And for his tale ſhulde ſeme the better,
Accordant to his wordes was his chere,
As techeth art of ſpeche hem that it lere.
Al be it that I cannot floure his ſtile,
Ne cannot climben over ſo high a ſtile,
Yet ſay I this, as to comun entent,
Thus much amounteth all that ever he ment,
If it ſo be that I have it in mind.
He ſayd, The King of Arabie and of Inde,
My liege Lord, on this ſolempne day,
Salueth you as he beſt can and may,
And ſendeth you, in honour of your feſte,
By me, that am al redy at your heſte,
This ſtede of bras, that eſily and wel
Can in the ſpace of a day naturel
(This is to ſayn, in four-and-twenty houres)
Wher ſo you liſt, in drought or elles ſhoures,
Beren your body into every place
To which your herte willeth for to pace,
Withouten wemme of you thurgh foule or faire;
Or if you liſt to fleen as high in the aire
As doth an egle, whan him liſt,
This ſame ſtede ſhal bere you evermore,
Withouten harme, till ye be ther you leſt,
(Though that ye ſlepen on his back or reſt)
And turne again with writhing of a pin;
He that it wrought he coude many a gin;
He waited many a conſtellation
Or he had don this operation,
And knew ful many a ſele and many a bond.
This mirrour eke that I have in min hond
Hath ſwiche a might that men may in it ſee
Whan ther ſhal falle ony adverſitee
Unto your regne or to yourſelf alſo,
And openly who is your friend or fo;
And over all this, if any lady bright
Hath ſet hire herte on any maner wight,
If he be falſe, ſhe ſhall his treſon ſee,
His newe love, and all his ſubtiltee,
So openly, that ther ſhal nothing hide.
Wherfore again this luſty ſomer tide
This mirrour and this ring, that ye may ſe,
He hath ſent to my Lady Canace,
Your excellente doughter that is here.
The vertue of this ring, if ye wol here,
Is this, that if hire liſt it for to were
Upon hire thombe, or in hire purſe it bere,
Ther is no foule that fleeth under heven
That ſhe ne ſhal wel underſtond his ſteven,
And know his mening openly and plaine,
And anſwere him in his langage again;
And every gras that groweth upon rote
She ſhal eke know, and whom it wol do bote,

All be his woundes never ſo depe and wide.
This naked ſwerd, that hangeth by my ſide,
Swiche vertue hath, that what man that it ſmite,
Thurghout his armure it wol kerve and bite,
Were it as thicke as is a braunched eke;
And what man that is wounded with the ſtroke
Shal never be hole, til that you liſt of grace
To ſtroken him with the platte in thilke place
Ther he is hurt; this is as much to ſain
Ye moten with the platte ſwerd again
Stroken him in the wound and it wol cloſe.
This is the veray ſoth withouten gloſe:
It failleth not while it is in your hold.
And whan this knight hath thus his tale told
He rideth out of halle, and doun he light.
His ſtede, which that ſhone as ſonne bright,
Stant in the court as ſtille as any ſton.
This knight is to his chambre ladde anon,
And is unarmed, and to the mete yſette.
Thiſe preſents ben ful richelich yſette,
This is to ſain, the ſwerd and the mirrour,
And borne anon into the highe tour
With certain officers ordained therfore;
And unto Canace the ring is bore
Solempnely, ther ſhe ſat at the table.
But ſikerly, withouten any fable,
The hors of bras, that may not be remued,
It ſtant as it were to the ground yglued:
Ther may no man out of the place it drive
For non engine of windas or polive:
And cauſe why, for they con not the craft,
And therfore in the place they han it laft
Til that the knight hath taught hem the manere
To voiden him, as ye ſhal after here.
Gret was the preſs that ſwarmed to and fro
To gauren on this hors that ſtondeth ſo;
For it ſo high was, and ſo brod and long,
So wel proportioned for to be ſtrong,
Right as it were a ſtede of Lumbardie,
Therwith ſo horſly and ſo quick of eye
As it a gentil Poileis courſer were;
For certes fro his tayl unto his ere
Nature ne art ne coud him not amend
In no degree, as all the peple wend.
But evermore hir moſte wonder was
How that it coude gon and was of bras:
It was of Faerie, as the peple ſemed:
Diverſe folk diverſely han demed:
As many heds as many wittes ben.
They marmured as doth a ſwarme of been,
And maden ſkilles after hir fantaſies,
Reherſing of the olde poetries,
And ſayd it was ylike the Pegaſee,
The hors that hadde winges for to flee,
Or elles it was the Grekes hors Sinon,
That broughte Troye to deſtruction,
As men mown in thiſe olde geſtes rede.
Min herte (quod on) is evermore in drede;
I trow ſom men of armes ben therin,
That ſhapen hem this citee for to win:
It were right good that al ſwiche thing were know.
Another rowned to his felaw low,
And ſayd, He lieth, for it is rather like
An apparence ymade by ſom magike,
As jogelours plaien at thiſe feſtes grete.
Of ſondry doutes thus they jangle and trete,
As lewed peple demen comunly
Of thinges that ben made more ſubtilly
Than they can in hir lewednesſe comprehende:
They demen gladly to the badder ende.
And ſom of hem wondred on the mirrour
That born was up in to the maiſter tour,
How men might in it ſwiche thinges ſee.
Another anſwered and ſayd, It might wel be
Naturelly by compoſitions
Of angles and ſlie reflections;
And ſaide that in Rome was ſwiche on.
They ſpeke of Alhazen and Vitellon,
And Ariſtotle, that writen in hir lives
Of queinte mirrours and of profpectives,
As knowen they that han hir bookes herd.
And other folk han wondred on the ſwerd
That wolde percen thurghout every thing;
And fell in ſpeche of Telephus the king,
And of Achilles for his queinte ſpere,
For he coude with it bothe hele and dere,
Right in ſwiche wiſe as men may with the ſwerd
Of which right now ye have yourſelven herd.
They ſpeken of ſondry harding of metall,
And ſpeken of medicines therwithall,
And how and whan it ſhuld yharded be,
Which is unknow algates unto me.
Tho ſpeken they of Canacees ring,
And ſaiden all that ſwiche a wonder thing
Of craft of ringes herd they never non,
Save that he Moiſes and King Salomon
Hadden a name of conning in ſwiche art.
Thus ſain the peple, and drawen hem apart.
But natheles ſom ſaiden that it was
Wonder to maken of ferne aſhen glas,
And yet is glas nought like aſhen of ferne;
But for they han yknowen it ſo ferne,
Therfore ceſeth hir jangling and hir wonder.
As ſore wondren ſom on cauſe of thonder,
On ebbe and floud, on goſſomer and on miſt,
And on all thing til that the cauſe is wiſt.
Thus janglen they, and demen and deviſe,
Til that the king gan fro his bord ariſe.
Phebus hath left the angle meridional,
And yet aſcending was the beſte real,
The gentil Leon, with his Aldrian,
Whan that this Tartre king, this Cambuſcan,
Roſe from his bord, ther as he ſat ful hie:
Beforne him goth the loude minſtralcie,
Til he come to his chambre of parements,
Ther as they founden divers inſtruments,
That it is like an heven for to here.
Now dauncen lufty Venus children dere,
For in the Fiſh hir lady ſat ful hie,
And loketh on hem with a frendly eye.
This noble king is ſet upon his trone,
This ſtraunge knight is ſet to him ful ſone,
And on the daunce he goth with Canace.
Here is the revell and the jolitee
That is not able a dull man to deviſe:
He muſt han knowen Love and his ſerviſe,
And ben a feſtlich man, as freſh as May,
That ſholde you deviſen ſwiche array.

Who coude tellen you the forme of daunces
So uncouth, and ſo freſhe contenaunces,
Swiche ſubtil lokings and diſſimulings,
For dred of jalous mennes apperceivings?
No man but Launcelot, and he is ded;
Therfore I paſſe over all this luſtyhed;
I ſay no more, but in this jolineſſe
I lete hem til men to the ſouper hem dreſſe.
The ſteward bit the ſpices for to hie,
And eke the win, in all this melodie;
The uſhers and the ſquierie ben gon,
The ſpices and the win is come anon:
They ete and drinke, and whan this had an end
Unto the temple, as reſon was, they wend:
The ſervice don, they ſoupen all by day.
What nedeth you reherſen hir array?
Eche man wot wel that at a kinges feſt
Is plentee to the moſt and to the leſt,
And deintees mo than ben in my knowing.
At after ſouper goth this noble king
To ſeen this hors of bras, with all a route
Of lordes and of ladies him aboute.
Swiche wondring was ther on this hors of bras,
That ſin the gret aſſege of Troye was
Ther as men wondred on an hors alſo,
Ne was ther ſwiche a wondring as was tho.
But, finally, the king aſketh the knight
The vertue of this courſer and the might,
And praied him to tell his governaunce.
This hors anon gan for to trip and daunce.
Whan that the knight laid hond up on his rein,
And ſaide, Sire, ther n'is no more to ſain,
But whan you liſt to riden any where
Ye moten trill a pin ſtant in his ere,
Which I ſhal tellen you betwixt us two,
Ye moten nempne him to what place alſo,
Or to what contree that you liſt to ride.
And whan ye come ther as you liſt abide,
Bid him deſcend, and trill another pin,
(For therin lieth the effect of all the gin)
And he wol doun deſcend and don your will,
And in that place he wol abiden ſtill;
Though all the world had the contrary ſwore,
He ſhal not thennes be drawe ne be bore:
Or if you liſt to bid him thennes gon,
Trille this pin, and he wol vaniſh anon
Out of the ſight of every maner wight,
And come agen, be it by day or night,
Whan that you liſt to clepen him again
In ſwiche a guiſe as I ſhal to you ſain
Betwixen you and me, and that ful ſone.
Ride whan you liſt, ther n'is no more to done.
Enfourmed whan the king was of the knight,
And hath conceived in his wit aright
The maner and the forme of all this thing,
Ful glad and blith this noble doughty king
Repaireth to his revel as beforne.
The bridel is in to the tour yborne,
And kept among his jewels leſe and dere:
The hors vaniſht, I n'ot in what manere,
Out of hir ſight, ye get no more of me:
But thus I lete in luſt and jolitee
This Cambuſcan his lordes feſteying
Til that wel nigh the day began to ſpring.

Pars ſecunda.

The norice of digeſtion, the ſlepe,
Gan on hem winke, and bad hem taken kepe
That mochel drinke and labour wol have reſt,
And with a galping mouth hem all he keſt,
And ſaid, that it was time to lie adoun,
For blood was in his dominatioun:
Cherifheth blood, natures frend, quod he.
They thanken him galping, by two, by three;
And every wight gan drawe him to his reſt,
As ſlepe hem bade; they toke it for the beſt.
Hir dremes ſhal not now be told for me;
Ful were hir hedes of fumoſitee,
That cauſeth dreme, of which ther is no charge:
They ſlepen till that it was prime large,
The moſte part, but it were Canace;
She was ful meſurable, as women be;
For of hire father had ſhe take hire leve
To gon to reſt ſone after it was eve;
Here liſte not appalled for to be,
Nor on the morwe unfeſtliche for to ſee,
And ſlept hire firſte ſlepe, and than awoke:
For ſwiche a joy ſhe in hire herte toke
Both of hire queinte ring and of hire mirrour,
That twenty time ſhe chaunged hire colour.
And in hire ſlepe right for the impreſſion
Of hire mirrour ſhe had a viſion;
Wherfore or that the ſonne gan up glide
She clepeth upon hire maiſtreſſe hire beſide,
And ſaide that hire luſte for to ariſe.
Thiſe olde women that ben gladly wiſe,
As is hire maiſtreſſe, anſwerd hire anon,
And ſaid, Madam, whider wol ye gon
Thus erly? for the folk ben all in reſt.
I wol, quod ſhe, ariſen (for me leſt
No longer for to ſlepe) and walken aboute.
Hire maiſtreſſe clepeth women a gret route,
And up they riſen wel a ten or twelve;
Up riſeth freſhe Canace hireſelve,
As rody and bright as the yonge ſonne
That in the Ram is foure degrees yronne;
No higher was he whan ſhe redy was;
And forth ſhe walketh eſily a pas,
Arrayed after the luſty ſeſon ſote
Lightely for to playe, and walken on fote,
Nought but with five or ſixe of hire meinie,
And in a trenche forth in the park goth ſhe.
The vapour which that fro the erthe glode
Maketh the ſonne to ſeme rody and brode;
But natheles it was ſo faire a ſight
That it made all hir hertes for to light,
What for the ſeſon and the morwening,
And for the foules that ſhe herde ſing,
For right anon ſhe wiſte what they ment
Right by hir ſong, and knew al hir entent.
The knotte why that every tale is tolde,
If it be taried til the luſt be colde
Of hem that han it herkened after yore,
The favour paſſeth ever lenger the more
For fulſumneſſe of the prolixitee;
And by that ſame reſon thinketh me
I ſhuld unto the knotte condeſcende,
And maken of hire walking ſone an ende.

Amidde a tree for-dry, as white as chalk,
As Canace was playing in hire walk,
Ther ſat a faucon over hire hed ful hie
That with a pitous vois ſo gan to crie,
That all the wood reſouned of hire cry,
And beten had hireſelf ſo pitouſly
With both hire winges til the rede blood
Ran endelong the tree ther as ſhe ſtood;
And ever in on alway ſhe cried and ſhright,
And with hire bek hireſelven ſhe ſo twight,
That ther n'is tigre ne no cruel beſt
That dwelleth other in wood or in foreſt
That n'olde han wept, if that he wepen coude,
For ſorwe of hire, ſhe ſhright alway ſo loude.
For ther was never yet no man on live,
If that he coude a faucon wel deſcrive,
That herde of ſwiche another of fayreneſſe
As wel of plumage as of gentileſſe
Of ſhape, of all that might yrekened be:
A faucon peregrine ſemed ſhe
Of fremde lond, and ever as ſhe ſtood
She ſwouned now and now for lack of blood,
Til wel neigh is ſhe fallen fro the tree.
This faire kinges doughter Canace,
That on hire finger bare the queinte ring,
Thurgh which ſhe underſtood wel every thing
That any foule may in his leden ſain,
And coude anſwere him in his leden again,
Hath underſtonden what this faucon ſeyd,
And wel neigh for the routhe almoſt ſhe deyd;
And to the tree ſhe goth ful haſtily,
And on this faucon loketh pitouſly,
And held hire lap abrode, for wel ſhe wiſt
The faucon muſte fallen from the twiſt
Whan that ſhe ſwouned next, for faute of blood.
A longe while to waiten hire ſhe ſtood,
Til at the laſt ſhe ſpake in this manere
Unto the hauk, as ye ſhul after here:
What is the cauſe, if it be for to tell,
That ye ben in this furial peine of hell?
Quod Canace unto this hauk above;
Is this for ſorwe of deth or loſſe of love?
For as I trow thiſe be the cauſes two
That cauſen moſt a gentil herte wo.
Of other harme it nedeth not to ſpeke,
For ye yourſelf upon yourſelf awreke,
Which preveth wel that other ire or drede
Mote ben encheſon of your cruel dede,
Sin that I ſe non other wight you chace.
For the love of God as doth yourſelven grace;
Or what may be your helpe? for weſt ne eſt
Ne ſaw I never er now no brid ne beſt
That ferde with himſelf ſo pitouſly.
Ye ſle me with your ſorwe verily,
I have of you ſo gret compaſſioun.
For Goddes love come fro the tree adoun,
And as I am a kinges doughter trewe,
If that I verily the cauſes knewe
Of your diſeſe, if it lay in my might
I wold amend it or that it were night,
As wiſly help me the gret God of kind;
And herbes ſhal I right ynough yfind
To helen with your hurtes haſtily.
Tho ſhright this faucon yet more pitouſly
Than ever ſhe did, and fell to ground anon,
And lith aſwoune as ded as lith a ſton,
Til Canace hath in hire lappe hire take
Unto that time ſhe gan of ſwoune awake,
And after that ſhe out of ſwoune abraide
Right in hire haukes leden thus ſhe ſayde:
That pitee renneth ſone in gentil herte
(Feling his ſimilitude in peines ſmerte)
Is proved alle day, as men may ſee
As wel by werke as by auctoritee,
For gentil herte kitheth gentilleſſe.
I ſee wel that ye have on my diſtreſſe
Compaſſion, my faire Canace,
Of veray womanly benignitee
That Nature in your principles hath ſet.
But for non hope for to fare the bet,
But for to obey unto your herte free,
And for to maken other ywarе by me,
As by the whelpe chaſtiſed is the leon,
Right for that cauſe and that concluſion,
While that I have a leiſer and a ſpace,
Min harme I wol confeſſen er I pace.
And ever while that on hire ſorwe told
That other wept as ſhe to water wold,
Til that the faucon bad hire to be ſtill,
And with a ſike right thus ſhe ſaid hire till:
Ther I was bred (alas that ilke day!)
And foſtred in a roche of marble gray
So tendrely, that nothing ailed me;
I ne wiſt not what was adverſitee
Til I coud flee full high under the ſkie.
Tho dwelled a tercelet me faſte by
That ſemed welle of alle gentilleſſe,
Al were he ful of treſon and falſeneſſe.
It was ſo wrapped under humble chere,
And under hew of trouth in ſwiche manere,
Under pleſance, and under beſy peine,
That no wight coud have wend he coude ſeine,
So depe in greyn he died his coloures.
Right as a ſerpent hideth him under floures,
Til he may ſee his time for to bite,
Right ſo this god of Loves hypocrite
Doth ſo his ceremonies and obeiſance,
And kepeth in ſemblaunt alle his obſervance
That ſouneth unto gentilleſſe of love.
As on a tombe is all the faire above,
And under is the corps, ſwiche as ye wote,
Swiche was this hypocrite both cold and hote,
And in this wiſe he ſerved his entent,
That ſave the fend non wiſte what he ment:
Til he ſo long had weped and complained,
And many a yere his ſervice to me fained,
Til that min herte, to pitous and to nice,
Al innocent of his crowned malice,
For-fered of his deth, as thoughte me,
Upon his othes and his ſeuretee
Graunted him love on this conditioun,
That evermo min honour and renoun
Were ſaved, both privee and apert;
This is to ſay, that after his deſert
I yave him all min herte and all my thought,
(God wote and he that other wayes nought)
And toke his herte in chaunge of min for ay.
But ſoth is ſaid, gon ſithen is many a day
A trewe wight and a theef thinken not on.
And whan he ſaw the thing ſo fer ygon,
That I had granted him fully my love,
In ſwiche a guiſe as I have ſaid above,

And yeven him my trewe herte as free
As he swore that he yaf his herte to me,
Anon this tigre, ful of doubleneſſe,
Fell on his knees with ſo gret humbleſſe,
With ſo high reverence, as by his chere,
So like a gentil lover of manere,
So raviſhed, as it ſemed, for the joye,
That never Jaſon ne Paris of Troye,
Jaſon! certes ne never other man
Sin Lamech was, that alderfirſt began
To loven two, as writen folk beſorne,
Ne never ſithen the firſt man was borne,
Ne coude man by twenty thouſand part
Contrefete the ſophimes of his art,
Ne were worthy to unbocle his galoche,
Ther doubleneſſe of faining ſhuld approche,
Ne coude ſo thanke a wight as he did me.
His maner was an heven for to ſee
To any woman, were ſhe never ſo wiſe,
So painted he and kempt at point deviſe
As wel his wordes as his contenance:
And I ſo loved him for his obeiſance,
And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,
That if ſo were that any thing him ſmerte,
Al were it never ſo lite, and I it wiſt,
Me thought I felt deth at myn herte twiſt.
And, ſhortly, ſo ferforth this thing is went,
That my will was his willes inſtrument;
This is to ſay, my will obeied his will
In alle thing, as fer as reſon fill,
Keping the boundes of my worſhip ever:
Ne never had I thing ſo leſe ne lever
As him, God wot, ne never ſhal no mo.
This laſteth lenger than a yere or two,
That I ſuppoſed of him nought but good:
But, finally, thus at the laſt it ſtood,
That Fortune wolde that he muſte twin
Out of that place which that I was in.
Wher me was wo it is no queſtion;
I cannot make of it deſcription:
For o thing dare I tellen boldely,
I know what is the peine of deth therby,
Swiche harme I felt, for he ne might byleve.
So on a day of me he toke his leve,
So forweful eke, that I wend verraily
That he had felt as mochel harme as I,
Whan that I herd him ſpeke and ſaw his hewe:
But natheles I thought he was ſo trewe,
And eke that he repairen ſhuld again
Within a litel while, ſoth for to ſain,
And reſon wold eke that he muſte go
For his honour, as often happeth ſo,
That I made vertue of neceſſitee,
And toke it wel ſin that it muſte be,
As I beſt might I hid fro him my ſorwe,
And toke him by the hond, Seint John to borwe,
And ſaid him thus, Lo, I am youres all,
Beth ſwiche as I have ben to you and ſhall.
What he anſwerd it nedeth not reherſe;
Who can ſay bet than he, who can do werſe?
Whan he hath al wel ſaid than hath he done;
Therfore behoveth him a ful long ſpone
That ſhal ete with a fend; thus herd I ſay.
So at the laſt he muſte forth his way;
Whan forth he fleeth, til he come ther him leſt.
Whan it came him to purpos for to reſt,
I trow that he had thilke text in mind,
That alle thing repairing to his kind
Gladeth himſelf; thus ſain men as I geſſe:
Men loven of propre kind newefangelneſſe,
As briddes don that men in cages ſede;
For though thou night and day take of hem hede,
And ſtrew hir cage faire and ſoft as ſilke,
And give hem ſugre, hony, bred, and milke,
Yet right anon as that his dore is up
He with his feet wol ſpurnen doun his cup,
And to the wood he wol and wormes ete,
So newefangel ben they of hir mete,
And loven noveltees of propre kind;
No gentilleſſe of blood ne may hem bind.
So ferd this tercelet, alas the day!
Though he were gentil borne, and freſh, and gay,
And goodly for to ſeen, and humble, and free,
He ſaw upon a time a kite flee,
And ſodenly he loved this kite ſo
That all his love is clene from me ago,
And hath his trouthe falſed in this wiſe.
Thus hath the kite my love in hire ſervice,
And I am lorn withouten remedy.
And with that word this faucon gan to cry,
And ſwouneth eft in Canacees barme.
Gret was the ſorwe for that haukes harme
That Canace and all hire women made;
They n'iſten how they might the faucon glade:
But Canace home bereth hire in hire lap,
And ſoftely in plaſtres gan hire wrap
Ther as ſhe with hir bek had hurt hireſelve.
Now cannot Canace but herbes delve
Out of the ground, and maken ſalves newe
Of herbes precious and fine of hewe
To helen with this hauk: fro day to night
She doth hire beſineſſe and all hire might.
And by hire beddes hed ſhe made a mew,
And covered it with velouettes blew,
In ſigne of trouth that is in woman ſene,
And all without the mew is peinted grene,
In which were peinted all thiſe falſe foules,
As ben thiſe tidifes, tercelettes, and owles,
And pies, on hem for to cry and chide,
Right for deſpit were peinted hem beſide.
Thus lete I Canace hire hauk keping:
I wol no more as now ſpeke of hire ring,
Til it come eft to purpos for to ſain,
How that this faucon gat hire love again
Repentant, as the ſtory telleth us,
By mediation of Cambalus,
The kinges ſone, of which that I you told;
But hennesforth I wol my proceſſe hold
To ſpeke of aventures and of batailles,
That yet was never herd ſo gret merveilles.
Firſt wol I tellen you of a Cambuſcan,
That in his time many a citee wan;
And after wol I ſpeke of Algarſif,
How that he wan Theodora to his wif,
For whom ful oft in gret peril he was,
Ne had he ben holpen by the hors of bras;
And after wol I ſpeke of Camballo,
That fought in liſtes with the brethren two
For Canace, er that he might hire winne,
And ther I left I wol again beginne.

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THE FRANKELEINES PROLOGUE.

In faith, Squier, thou haſt thee wel yquit,
And gentilly: I preiſe wel thy wit,
Quod the Frankelein. Conſidering thin youthe
So felingly thou ſpekeſt, Sire, I alowe the
As to my dome ther is non that is here
Of eloquence that ſhal be thy pere
If that you live: God yeve thee goode chance,
And in vertue ſend thee continuance,
For of thy ſpeking I have gret deintee.
I have a ſone, and by the Trinitee
It were me lever than twenty pound worth lond,
Though it right now were fallen in my hond,
He were a man of ſwiche diſcretion
As that ye ben. Fie on poſſeſſion
But if a man be vertuous withal!
I have my ſone ſnibbed and yet ſhal,
For he to vertue liſteth not to entend,
But for to play at dis and to diſpend,
And leſe all that he hath, is his uſage;
And he had lever talken with a page
Than to commune with any gentil wight
Ther he might leren gentilleſſe aright.
Straw for your gentilleſſe! quod our Hoſte.
What? Frankelein, parde, Sire, wel thou woſt
That eche of you mote tellen at the leſt
A Tale or two, or breken his beheſt.
That know I wel, Sire, quod the Frankelein:
I pray you haveth me not in diſdain
Though I to this man ſpeke a word or two.
Tell on thy Tale withouten wordes mo.
Gladly, Sire Hoſte, quod he, I wol obey
Unto your will: now herkeneth what I ſey:
I wol you not contrarien in no wiſe,
As fer as that my wittes may ſuffice.
I pray to God that it may pleſen you,
Than wot I wel that is good ynow.
Thiſe olde gentil Bretons in hir dayes
Of diverſe aventures maden layes
Rimeyed in hir firſte Breton tonge,
Which layes with hire inſtruments they ſonge,
Or elles redden hem for hir pleſance,
And on of hem have I in remembrance,
Which I ſhall ſayn with good wille as I can.
But, Sires, becauſe I am a borel man,
At my beginning firſt I you beſeche
Have me excuſed of my rude ſpeche:
I lerned never rhetorike certain;
Thing that I ſpeke it mote be bare and plain:
I ſlept never on the Mount of Pernaſo,
Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Cicero.
Colours ne know I non, withouten drede,
But ſwiche colours as growen in the mede,
Or elles ſwiche as men die with or peinte;
Colours of rhetorike ben to me queinte;
My ſpirit feleth not of ſwiche matere:
But if you liſt, my Tale ſhul ye here.

THE FRANKELEINES TALE*.

In Armorike, that called is Bretaigne,
Ther was a knight that loved and did his peine
To ſerve a ladie in his beſte wiſe,
And many a labour, many a gret empriſe,
He for his lady wrought or ſhe were wonne,
For ſhe was on the faireſt under ſonne,
And eke therto comen of ſo high kinrede
That wel unnethes durſt this knight for drede
Tell hire his wo, his peine, and his diſtreſſe:
But at the laſt ſhe for his worthineſſe,
And namely for his meke obeyſance,
Hath ſwiche a pitee caught of his penance,
That prively ſhe fell of his accord
To take him for hire huſbond and hire lord,
(Of ſwiche lordſhip as men han over hir wives)
And, for to lede the more in bliſſe hir lives,

* Aurelius, after much labour and coſt beſtowed to win the love of Dorigen, another man's wife, is content in the end, through the good dealing of her and her huſband, to loſe both his labour and coſt. The ſcope of this Tale ſeemeth to be a contention of courteſy. *Urry.*

Of his free will he ſwore hire as a knight
That never in all his lif he day ne night
Ne ſhulde take upon him no maiſtrie
Agains hire will, ne kithe hir jalouſie,
But hire obey, and folwe hire will in al,
As any lover to his lady ſhal,
Save that the name of ſoverainetee,
That wold he han for ſhame of his degree.
She thonked him, and with ful gret humbleſſe
She ſaide, Sire, ſin of your gentilleſſe
Ye profren me to have ſo large a reine,
Ne wolde God never betwix us tweine,
As in my gilt, were either werre or ſtrif:
Sire, I wol be your humble trewe wif,
Have here my trouth, till that myn herte breſte.
Thus ben they both in quiete and in reſte.
For o thing, Sires, ſaufly dare I ſeie,
That frendes everich other muſt obeie,
If they wol long holden compagnie:
Love wol not be conſtreined by maiſtrie:
Whan maiſtrie cometh, the god of Love anon
Beteth his winges, and, farewel, he is gon.
Love is a thing as any ſpirit free.
Women of kind deſiren libertee,
And not to be conſtreined as a thral;
And ſo don men, if ſothly I ſay ſhal.
Loke, who that is moſt patient in love
He is at his avantage all above.
Patience is an high vertue certain,
For it venquiſheth, as thiſe clerkes fain,
Thinges that rigour never ſhulde atteine.
For every word men may not chide or pleine.
Lerneth to ſuffren, or, ſo mote I gon,
Ye ſhul it lerne whether ye wol or non;
For in this world certain no wight ther is
That he ne doth or ſayth ſomtime amis.
Ire, ſikneſſe, or conſtellation,
Win, wo, or changing of complexion,
Cauſeth ful oft to don amis or ſpeken:
On every wrong a man may not be wreken.
After the time muſt be temperance
To every wight that can of governance:
And therfore hath this worthy wife knight
(To liven in eſe) ſuffrance hire behight,
And ſhe to him ful wiſly gan to ſwere
That never ſhuld ther be defaute in here.
Here may men ſeen an humble wife accord;
Thus hath ſhe take hire ſervant and hire lord,
Servant in love and lord in mariage.
Than was he both in lordſhip and ſervage?
Servage! nay, but in lordſhip al above,
Sin he hath both his lady and his love;
His lady certes, and his wif alſo,
The which that law of love acordeth to.
And whan he was in this proſperitee
Home with his wif he goth to his contree,
Not fer fro Penmark, ther his dwelling was,
Wher as he liveth in bliſſe and in ſolas.
Who coude telle, but he had wedded be,
The joye, the eſe, and the proſperitee
That is betwix an huſbond and his wif?
A vere and more laſteth this blisful lif,
Til that this knight, of which I ſpake of thus,
That of Cairrud was cleped Arviragus,

Shope him to gon and dwelle a yere or twaine
In Engleland, that cleped was eke Bretaigne,
To ſeke in armes worſhip and honour,
(For all his luſt he ſet in ſwiche labour:)
And dwelte ther two yere: the book ſaith thus.
Now wol I ſtint of this Arviragus,
And ſpeke I wol of Dorigene his wif,
That loveth hire huſbond as hire hertes lif.
For his abſence wepeth ſhe and ſiketh,
As don thiſe noble wives whan hem liketh:
She morneth, waketh, waileth, faſteth, pleineth:
Deſir of his preſence hire ſo diſtraineth,
That all this wide world ſhe ſet at nought.
Hire frendes, which that knew hire hevy thought,
Comforten hire in all that ever they may;
They prechen hire, they telle hire night and day
That cauſeles ſhe ſleth hireſelf, alas!
And every comfort poſſible in this cas
They don to hire with all hire beſineſſe,
Al for to make hire leve hire hevineſſe.
By proceſſe, as ye knowen everich on,
Men mowe ſo longe graven in a ſton
Til ſom figure therin emprented be:
So long han they comforted hire til ſhe
Received hath, by hope and by reſon,
The emprenting of hir conſolation,
Thurgh which hire grete ſorwe gan aſſuage:
She may not alway duren in ſwiche rage.
And eke Arviragus, in all this care,
Hath ſent his lettres home of his welfare,
And that he wol come haſtily again,
Or elles had this ſorwe hire herte ſlain.
Hire frendes ſaw hire ſorwe gan to ſlake,
And preiden hire on knees, for Goddes ſake,
To come and romen in hir compagnie,
Away to driven hire darke fantaſie:
And, finally, ſhe granted that requeſt,
For wel ſhe ſaw that it was for the beſt.
Now ſtood hire caſtel faſte by the ſee,
And often with hire frendes walked ſhe,
Hire to diſporten on the bank an hie,
Wher as ſhe many a ſhip and barge ſie
Sailing hir cours wher as hem liſt to go:
But than was that a parcel of hire wo,
For to hireſelf ful oft, alas! ſaid ſhe,
Is ther no ſhip, of ſo many as I ſee,
Wol bringen home my lord? than were my herte
Al wariſhed of his bitter peines ſmerte.
Another time wold ſhe ſit and thinke,
And caſt hire eyen dounward fro the brinke;
But whan ſhe ſaw the griſly rockes blake,
For veray fere ſo wold hire herte quake
That on hire feet ſhe might hire not ſuſtene:
Than wold ſhe ſit adoun upon the grene,
And pitouſly into the ſee behold,
And ſay right thus, with careful ſikes cold:
Eterne God! that thurgh thy purveance
Ledeſt this world by certain governance,
In idel, as men ſain, ye nothing make:
But, Lord! thiſe griſly fendly rockes blake,
That ſemen rather a foule confuſion
Of werk than any faire creation
Of ſwiche a parfit wiſe God and ſtable,
Why han ye wrought this werk unreſonable?

For by this werk north, south, ne west, ne est,
Ther n'is yfostred man, ne brid, ne best:
It doth no good to my wit, but anoyeth.
See ye not, Lord! how mankind it destroyeth?
An hundred thousand bodies of mankind
Han rockes slain, al be they not in mind,
Which mankind is so faire part of thy werk,
Thou made it like to thyn owen merk,
Than, semeth it, ye had a gret chertee
Toward mankind; but how than may it be
That ye swiche menes make it to destroyen,
Which menes don no good, but ever anoyen?
I wote wel clerkes wol sain as hem lest,
By arguments, that all is for the best,
Though I ne can the causes nought yknow;
But thilke God that made the wind to blow
As kepe my lord; this is my conclusion;
To clerkes lete I all disputison:
But wolde God that all thise rockes blake
Were sonken into helle for his sake:
Thise rockes slee min herte for the fere.
Thus wold she say with many a pitous tere.
Hire frendes saw that it was no disport
To romen by the see, but discomfort,
And shape hem for to plaien somwher elles.
They leden hire by rivers and by welles,
And eke in other places delitable;
They dancen, and they play at ches and tables.
So on a day, right in the morwe tide,
Unto a gardin that was ther beside,
In which that they had made hir ordinance
Of vitaille and of other purveance,
They gon and plaie hem all the longe day;
And this was on the sixte morwe of May,
Which May had peinted with his softe shoures
This garden ful of leves and of floures:
And craft of mannes hond so curiously
Arrayed had this gardin trewely,
That never was ther gardin of swiche pris,
But if it were the veray Paradis.
The odour of floures and the freshe sight
Wold han ymaked any herte light
That ever was born, but if to gret sikenesse
Or to gret sorwe held it in distresse,
So ful it was of beautee and plesance.
And after dinner gonnen they to dance
And sing also, saue Dorigene alone,
Which made alway hire complaint and hire mone,
For she ne saw him on the dance go
That was hire husbond and hire love also:
But natheles she must a time abide,
And with good hope let hire sorwe slide.
Upon this dance, amonges other men,
Danced a squier before Dorigen
That fresher was and jolier of array,
As to my dome, than is the month of May.
He singeth, danceth, passing any man
That is or was sin that the world began;
Therwith he was, if men shuld him discrive,
One of the beste faring men on live;
Yong, strong, and vertuous, and riche, and wise,
And wel beloved, and holden in gret prise.
And, shortly, if the soth I tellen shal,
Unweting of this Dorigene at al,
This lusty squier, servant to Venus,
Which that ycleped was Aurelius,
Had loved hire best of any creature
Two yere and more, as was his aventure,
But never dorst he tell hire his grevance:
Withouten cup he dranke all his penance.
He was dispeired; nothing dorst he say,
Save in his songes somewhat wold he wray
His wo, as in a general complaining;
He said he loved and was beloved nothing.
Of swiche matere made he many layes,
Songes, complaintes, roundels, virelayes;
How that he dorste not his sorwe telle,
But languisheth as doth a Furie in helle;
And die he must, he said, as did Ecco
For Narcissus, that dorst not tell hire wo.
In other manner than ye here me say
Ne dorst he not to hire his wo bewray,
Save that paraventure somtime at dances,
Ther yonge folk kepen hir observances,
It may wel be he loked on hire face
In swiche a wise as man that axeth grace;
But nothing wiste she of his entent.
Natheless it happened or they thennes went,
Becaus that he was hire neighebour,
And was a man of worship and honour,
And had yknowen him of time yore,
They fell in speche, and forth ay more and more
Unto his purpos drew Aurelius,
And when he saw his time he saide thus:
Madame quod he, by God that this world made,
So that I wist it might your herte glade,
I wold that day that your Arviragus
Went over see that I Aurelius
Had went ther I shuld never come again,
For wel I wot my service is in vain;
My guerdon n'is but bresting of min herte.
Madame, rueth upon my peines smerte,
For with a word ye may me sleen or save.
Here at your feet God wold that I were grave.
I ne have as now no leiser more to sey:
Have mercy, swete! or ye wol do me dey.
She gan to loke upon Aurelius:
Is this your will, (quod she) and say ye thus?
Never erst (quod she) ne wist I what ye ment,
But now, Aurelie, I know your entent.
By thilke God that yaf me soule and lif
Ne shal I never ben an untrew wif
In word ne werk, es fer as I have wit;
I wol ben his to whom that I am knit:
Take this for final answer as of me.
But after that in play thus said she:
Aurelie, (quod she) by high God above
Yet wol I granten you to ben your love,
(Sin I you see so pitously complaine.)
Loke, what day that endelong Bretaigne
Ye remue all the rockes ston by ston,
That they ne letten ship ne bote to gon;
I say, whan he han made the cost so clene
Of rockes that ther n'is no ston ysene,
Than wol I love you best of any man;
Have here my trouth, in all that ever I can,
For wel I wote that it shal never betide.
Lete swiche folie out of your herte glide:

What deintee ſhuld a man have in his lif
For to go love another mannes wif
That hath hire body whan that ever him liketh?
Aurelius ful often ſore ſiketh:
Is ther non other grace in you? quod he.
No, by that Lord, quod ſhe, that maked me.
Wo was Aurelie whan that he this herd,
And with a ſorweful herte he thus anſwerd:
Madame, quod he, this were impoſſible;
Than moſte I die of ſoden deth horrible.
And with that word the turned him anon.
Tho come hire other frendes many on,
And in the alleyes romed up and doun,
And nothing wiſt of this concluſioun,
But ſodenly begonnen revel newe,
Til that the brighte ſonne had loſt his hewe,
For the orizont had reft the ſonne his light,
(This is as much to ſayn as it was night)
And home they gon in mirthe and in ſolas,
Sauf only wrecche Aurelius, alas!
He to his hous is gon with ſorweful herte;
He ſaith he may not from his deth aſterte:
Him ſemeth that he felt his herte cold,
Up to the heven his hondes gan he hold,
And on his knees bare he ſet him doun,
And in his raving ſaid his oriſoun.
For veray wo out of his wit he braide;
He n'iſte what he ſpake, but thus he ſaide;
With pitous herte his plaint hath he begonne
Unto the goddes, and firſt unto the Sonne.
He ſaid, Apollo! god and governour
Of every plante, herbe, tree, and flour,
That yeveſt after thy declination
To eche of hem his time and his ſeſon,
As that thin herbergh changeth low and hie,
Lord Phebus! caſt thy merciable eie
On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but lorne;
Lo, Lord! my lady hath my deth yſworne
Withouten gilt, but thy benignitee
Upon my dedly herte have ſom pitee:
For wel I wot Lord Phebus, if you leſt,
Ye may me helpen ſauf my lady beſt.
Now voucheth ſauf that I may you deviſe
How that I may be holpe, and in what wiſe.
Your bliſful ſuſter, Lucina the ſhene,
That of the ſee is chief goddeſſe and quene,
Though Neptunus have deitee in the ſee,
Yet emperice aboven him is ſhe:
Ye knowe wel, Lord, that right as hire deſire
Is to be quicked and lighted of your fire,
For which ſhe folweth you ful beſily,
Right ſo the ſee deſireth naturelly
To folwen hire, as ſhe that is goddeſſe
Both in the ſee and rivers more and leſſe:
Wherfore, Lord Phebus! this is my requeſt,
Do this miracle, or do min herte breſt,
That now next at this oppoſition,
Which in the ſigne ſhal be of the Leon,
As preyeth hire ſo gret a flood to bring,
That five fadome at the leſt it overſpring
The higheſt rock in Armorike Bretaigne,
And let this flood enduren yeres twaine;
Than certes to my lady may I ſay,
Holdeth your heſt, the rockes ben away.
Lord Phebus! this miracle doth for me,
Prey hire ſhe go no faſter cours than ye:
I ſay this, preyeth your ſuſter that ſhe go
No faſter cours than ye thiſe yeres two,
Than ſhal ſhe ben even at ful alway,
And ſpring-flood laſten bothe night and day.
And but ſhe vouchefauf in ſwiche manere
To graunten me my ſoveraine lady dere,
Prey hire to ſinken every rock adoun
Into hire owen derke regioun
Under the ground, ther Pluto dwelleth in,
Or nevermo ſhal I my lady win.
Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot ſeke.
Lord Phebus! ſee the teres on my cheke,
And on my peine have ſom compaſſioun.
And with that word in ſorwe he fell adoun,
And longe time he lay forth in a trance.
His brother, which that knew of his penance,
Up caught him, and to bed he hath him brought.
Diſpeired in this turment and this thought
Let I this woful creature lie,
Cheſe he for me whether he wol live or die.
Arviragus with hele and gret honour
(As he that was of chevalrie the flour)
Is comen home, and other worthy men:
O bliſful art thou now, thou Dorigen!
That haſt thy luſty huſbond in thin armes,
The freſhe knight, the worthy man of armes,
That loveth thee as his owen hertes lif.
Nothing liſt him to be imaginatif
If any wight had ſpoke while he was oute
To hire of love; he had of that no doubte:
He not entendeth to no ſwiche matere,
But danceth, juſteth, and maketh mery chere.
And thus in joye and bliſſe I let him dwell,
And of the ſike Aurelius wol I tell.
In langour and in turment furious
Two yere and more lay wrecched Aurelius
Er any foot on erthe he mighte gon;
Ne comfort in this time ne had he non
Sauf of his brother, which that was a clerk:
He knew of all this wo and all this werk,
For to non other creature certain
Of this matere he dorſte no word ſain:
Under his breſt he bare it more ſecree
Than ever did Pamphilus for Galathee.
His breſt was hole withouten for to ſeen,
But in his herte ay was the arwe kene,
And wel ye knowe that of a ſurſanure
In ſurgerie is perilous the cure,
But men might touch the arwe or come therby.
His brother wepeth and waileth prively,
Til at the laſt him fell in remembrance
That while he was at Orleaunce in France,
As yonge clerkes that ben likerous
To reden artes that ben curious
Seken in every halke and every herne
Particuler ſciences for to lerne,
He him remembred that upon a day
At Orleaunce in ſtudie a book he ſay
Of magike naturel, which his felaw
That was that time a bacheler of law,
Al were he ther to lerne another craft,
Had prively upon his deſk ylaft;

Which book ſpake moche of operations
Touching the eight-and-twenty manſions
That longen to the mone, and ſwiche folie
As in our dayes n'is not worth a flie;
For holy churches feith, in our beleve,
Ne ſuffreth non illuſion us to greve.
And whan this book was in his remembrance
Anon for joye his herte gan to dance,
And to himſelf he ſaied prively,
My brother ſhall be warished haſtily;
For I am ſiker that ther be ſciences
By which men maken divers appearances
Swiche as thiſe ſubtil tregetoures play;
For oft at feſtes have I wel herd ſay
That tregetoures, within an halle large,
Have made come in a water and a barge,
And in the halle rowen up and doun;
Some time had ſemed com a grim leoun,
And ſomtime floures ſpring as in a mede,
Somtime a vine, and grapes white and rede,
Somtime a caſtel al of lime and ſton,
And whan hem liketh voideth it anon:
Thus ſemeth it to every mannes ſight.

Now than conclude I thus; if that I might
At Orleaunce ſom olde felaw find
That hath thiſe moones manſions in mind,
Or other magike naturel above,
He ſhuld wel make my brother have his love;
For with an apparence a clerk may make,
To mannes ſight, that all the rockes blake
Of Bretaigne were yvoided everich on,
And ſhippes by the brinke comen and gon,
And in ſwiche forme endure a day or two:
Than were my brother warished of his wo,
Than muſt ſhe nedes holden hire beheſt,
Or elles he ſhal ſhame hire at the leſt.

What ſhuld I make a longer Tale of this?
Unto his brothers bed he comen is,
And ſwiche comfort he yaf him for to gon
To Orleaunce, that he up ſtert anon,
And on his way forthward than is he fare,
In hope for to ben liſſed of his care.

Whan they were come almoſt to that citee,
But if it were a two ſtulong or three,
A yonge clerk roming by himſelf they mette,
Which that in Latine thriftily hem grette:
And after that he ſayd a wonder thing;
I know, quod he, the cauſe of your coming:
And or they forther any foote weut
He told hem all that was in hir entent.

This Breton clerk him ared of felawes
The which he had yknowen in olde dawes,
And he anſwered him that they dede were,
For which he wept ful often many a tere.

Doun of his horn Aurelius light anon,
And forth with this magicien is gon
Home to his hous, and made hem wel at eſe:
Hem lacked no vitaille that might hem pleſe.
So wel arraied hous as ther was on
Aurelius in his liſ ſaw never non.

He ſhewed him, or they went to ſoupere,
Foreſtes, parkes, ful of wilde dere:
Ther ſaw he hertes with hir hornes hie,
The greteſt that were ever ſeen with eie;
He ſaw of hem an hundred ſlain with houndes
And ſom with arwes blede of bitter woundes:
He ſaw, when voided were the wilde dere,
Thiſe fauconers upon a faire rivere
That with hir haukes han the heron ſlain.

Tho ſaw he knightes juſten in a plain:
And after this he did him ſwiche pleſance,
That he him ſhewed his lady on a dance,
On which himſelven danced, as him thought.
And whan this maiſter, that this magike wrought,
Saw it was time, he clapped his hondes two,
And farewel, al the revel is ago!
And yet remued they never out of the hous,
While they ſaw all thiſe ſightes marvellous,
But in his ſtudie, ther his bookes be,
They ſaten ſtill, and no wight but they three.

To him this maiſter called his ſquier,
And ſayd him thus, May we go to ſouper?
Almoſt an houre it is, I undertake,
Sin I you bade our ſouper for to make,
Whan that thiſe worthy men wenten with me
Into my ſtudie ther my bookes be.

Sire, quod this ſquier, whan it liketh you,
It is al redy, though ye wol right now.

Go we than ſoupe, quod he, as for the beſt;
Thiſe amorous folk ſomtime moſt han reſt.

At after ſouper fell they in tretee
What ſumme ſhuld this maiſters guerdon be
To remue all the rockes of Bretaigne,
And eke from Gerounde to the mouth of Saine.

He made it ſtrange, and ſwore, ſo God him ſave,
Leſſe than a thouſand pound he wold not have,
Ne gladly for that ſumme he wol not gon.

Aurelius with bliſsful herte anon
Anſwered thus; Fie on a thouſand pound!
This wide world, which that men ſayn is round,
I wold it yave, if I were lord of it.
This bargaine is ful drive, for we ben knit.
Ye ſhul be paied trewely, by my trouth;
But loketh, for non negligence or ſlouth
Ye tarie us here no lenger than to morwe.
Nay, quod this clerk, have here my faith to borwe.

To bed is gon Aurelius whan him leſt,
And wel nigh all that night he had his reſt.
What for his labour and his hope of bliſſe
His woful herte of penance had a liſſe.

Upon the morwe whan that it was day
To Bretaigne token they the righte way,
Aurelie, and this magicien him beſide,
And ben deſcended ther they wold abide:
And this was, as the bookes me remember,
The colde froſty ſeſon of December.

Phebus waxe old and hewed like Laton,
That in his hote declination
Shone as the burned gold with ſtremes bright;
But now in Capricorne adoun he light,
Wher as he ſhone ful pale, I dare wel ſain.
The bitter froſte with the ſleet and rain
Deſtroyed hath the grene in every yerd;
Janus ſit by the fire with double berd,
And drinketh of his bugle horn the wine;
Beforn him ſtant braune of the tuſked ſwine,

And Newel crieth every luſty man.
Aurelius in all that ever he can
Doth to his maiſter chere and reverence,
And praieth him to don his diligence
To bringen him out of his peines ſmerte,
Or with a ſwerd that he wold ſlit his herte.
This ſotil clerk ſwiche routh hath on this man,
That night and day he ſpedeth him that he can
To wait a time of his concluſion;
This is to ſayn, to make illuſion,
By ſwiche an apparence or joglerie,
(I can no termes of aſtrologie)
That ſhe and every wight ſhuld wene and ſay
That of Bretaigne the rockes were away,
Or elles they were ſonken under ground.
So at the laſt he hath his time yfound
To make his japes and his wretchedneſſe
Of ſwiche a ſuperſtitious curſedneſſe.
His tables Toletanes forth he brought,
Ful wel corrected, that ther lacked nought,
Nother his collect ne his expans yeres,
Nother his rotes ne his other geres,
As ben his centres and his argumentes,
And his proportionel convenientes,
For his equations in every thing:
And by his eighte ſpheres in his werking
He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was ſhove
Fro the hed of thilke fix Aries above
That in the ninthe ſpere conſidered is;
Ful ſotilly he calculed all this.
Whan he had found his firſte manſion
He knew the remenant by proportion,
And knew the riſing of his mone wel,
And in whos face, and terme, and every del;
And knew ful wel the mones manſion
Accordant to his operation;
And knew alſo his other obſervances,
For ſwiche illuſions and ſwiche meſchances
As Hethen folke uſed in thilke daies;
For which no lenger maketh he delaies,
But thurgh his magike, for a day or tway,
It ſeemed all the rockes were away.
Aurelius, which that deſpeired is
Whether he ſhal han his love or fare amis,
Awaiteth night and day on this miracle;
And whan he knew that ther was non obſtacle,
That voided were thiſe rockes everich on,
Doun to his maiſteres feet he fell anon,
And ſayd, I, woful wretch Aurelius,
Thanke you, my lord, and lady min Venus,
That me han holpen fro my cares cold
And to the temple his way forth hath he hold,
Theras he knew he ſhuld his lady ſee;
And whan he ſaw his time anon right he
With dredful herte and with ful humble chere
Salued hath his ſoveraine lady dere.
My right ful Lady, quod this woful man,
Whom I moſt drede and love as I beſt can,
And lotheſt were of all this world diſpleſe,
Nere it that I for you have ſwiche diſeſe
I muſt die here at your foot anon,
Hold I tell how me is wo begon;
Her muſt I die or plaine;
Is for veray peine:
But of my deth though that ye han no routh
Aviſeth you or that you breke your trouth:
Repenteth you, for thilke God above,
Or ye me ſle, becauſe that I you love:
For, Madame, wel ye wote what ye have hight;
Not that I chalenge any thing of right
Of you my ſoveraine Lady, but of grace;
But in a garden yond, in ſwiche a place,
Ye wote right wel what ye behighten me,
And in myn hond your trouthe plighten ye
To love me beſt: God wote ye ſaied ſo,
Although that I unworthy be therto.
Madame, I ſpeke it for the honour of you,
More than to ſave my hertes lif right now,
I have don ſo as ye commanded me,
And if ye vouchesauf ye may go ſee.
Doth as you liſt, have your beheſt in mind,
For quick or ded right ther ye ſhul me find.
In you lith all to do me live or dey,
But wel I wote the rockes ben awey.
He taketh his leve, and ſhe aſtonied ſtood;
In all hire face n'as a drope of blood:
She wened never han come in ſwiche a trappe.
Alas! quod ſhe, that ever this ſhould happe!
For wend I never by poſſibilitee
That ſwiche a monſtre or mervaille might be:
It is again the proceſſe of Nature.
And home ſhe goth a ſorweful creature;
For veray fere unnethes may ſhe go.
She wepeth, waileth, all a day or two,
And ſwouneth that it routhe was to ſee,
But why it was to no wight tolde ſhe,
For out of toun was gon Arviragus;
But to hireſelf ſhe ſpake, and ſaied thus,
With face pale, and with ful ſory chere,
In hire complaint, as ye ſhul after here.
Alas! quod ſhe, on thee, Fortune, I plain,
That unaware haſt me wrapped in thy chain,
Fro which to eſcapen wote I no ſoccour
Sauf only deth or elles diſhonour:
On of thiſe two behoveth me to chuſe.
But natheles, yet had I a lever leſe
My lif than of my body have a ſhame,
Or know myſelven falſe, or leſe my name:
And with my deth I may be quit ywis;
Hath ther not many a noble wif or this,
And many a maid, yſlaine hireſelf, alas!
Rather than with hire body don treſpas?
Yes certes; lo, thiſe ſtories bere witneſſe.
Whan thirty tyrants ful of curſedneſſe
Had ſlain Phidon in Athens at the feſt,
They commanded his doughtren for to arreſt
And bringen hem beforne him deſpit
Al naked, to fulfil hire foule delit;
And in hir fadres blood they made hem dance
Upon the pavement, God yeve hem meſchance!
For which thiſe woful maidens, ful of drede,
Rather than they wold leſe hir maidenhede,
They prively ben ſtert into a welle,
And dreint hemſelven, as the bookes telle.
They of Meſſene let enquere and ſeke
Of Lacedomie fifty maidens eke
On which the wolden don hir locherie;
But ther was non of all that compagnie

That ſhe n'as ſlaine, and with a glad entent
Chees rather for to dien than aſſent
To ben oppreſſed of hire maidenhede.
Why ſhuld I than to dein ben in drede?
Lo eke the tyrant Ariſtoclides,
That loved a maid hight Stimphalides,
Whan that hire father ſlaine was on a night,
Unto Dianes temple goth ſhe right,
And hente the image in hire handes two,
Fro which image wold ſhe never go;
No wight her handes might it of it arrace
Til ſhe was ſlaine right in the ſelve place.
Now ſin that maidens hadden ſwiche deſpit
To be defouled with mannes foule delit,
Wel ought a wif rather hireſelven ſle
Than be defouled, as it thinketh me.
What ſhal I ſayn of Haſdrubales wif,
That at Cartage beraft hireſelf hire lif?
For whan ſhe ſaw that Romains wan the toun,
She toke hire children all, and ſkipt adoun
Into the fire, and chees rather to die
Than any Romain did hire valanie.
Hath not Lucrece yſlaine hireſelf, alas!
At Rome, whan that ſhe oppreſſed was
Of Tarquine? for hire thought it was a ſhame
To liven whan ſhe hadde loſt hire name.
The ſeven maidens of Mileſie alſo
Han ſlaine hemſelf, for veray drede and wo,
Rather than folk of Gaule hem ſhuld oppreſſe.
Mo than a thouſand ſtories, as I geſſe,
Conde I now tell as touching this matere.
Whan Abradate was ſlain, his wif ſo dere
Hireſelven ſlow, and let hire blood to glide
In Abradates woundes depe and wide,
And ſayd, My body at the leſte way
Ther ſhal no wight defoulen if I may.
What ſhuld I mo enſamples hereof ſain?
Sin that ſo many han hemſelven ſlain,
Wel rather than they wold defouled be,
I wol conclude that it is bet for me
To ſle myſelf than be defouled thus:
I wol be trewe unto Arviragus,
Or elles ſle myſelf in ſome manere,
As Did Demotiones doughter dere,
Becauſe ſhe wolde not defouled be.
O Sedaſus! it is ful gret pitee
To reden how thy doughtren died, alas!
That ſlowe hemſelven for ſwiche maner cas.
As gret a pitee was it, or wel more,
The Theban maiden that for Nichanore
Hireſelven ſlow right for ſwiche menere wo.
Another Theban mayden did right ſo,
For on of Macedoine had hire oppreſſed;
She with hire deth hire maidenhed redreſſed.
What ſhal I ſain of Nicerates wif,
That for ſwiche cas bereft hireſelf hire lif?
How trewe was eke to Alcibiades
His love, that for to dien rather chees
Than for to ſuffre his body unburied be?
Lo, which a wif was Alceſte eke? (quod ſhe)
What ſayth Homere of good Penelope?
All Greece knoweth of hire chaſtitee.
Parde of Laodomia is wretten thus,
That whan at Troye was ſlain Proteſilaus
No lenger wolde ſhe live after his day.
The ſame of noble Portia tell I may;
Withouten Brutus coude ſhe not live,
To whom ſhe had all whole hire herte yeve.
The parfit wifhood of Artemiſie
Honoured is thurghout all Barbarie.
O Teuta quene! thy wifly chaſtitee
To alle wives may a mirrour be.
Thus plained Dorigene a day or twey,
Purpoſing ever that ſhe wolde dey;
But natheles upon the thridde night
Home came Arviragus, the worthy knight,
And axed hire why that ſhe weep ſo ſore?
And ſhe gan wepen ever lenger the more.
Alas, quod ſhe, that ever I was yborne!
Thus have I ſaid, (quod ſhe) thus have I ſworne,
And told him all, as ye have herd before:
It nedeth not reherſe it you no more.
This huſbond with glad chere, in frendly wiſe,
Anſwerd and ſayd as I ſhal you deviſe;
Is ther ought elles, Dorigene, but this?
Nay, nay, quod ſhe, God, helpe me ſo, as wis
This is to much, and it were Goddes will.
Ye, wif, quod he, let ſlepen that is ſtill;
It may be wel paraventure, yet to-day.
Ye ſhal your trouthe holden by my fay;
For God ſo wiſly have mercy on me,
I had wel lever ſtiked for to be,
For veray love which that I to you have,
But if ye ſhuld your trouthe kepe and ſave:
Trouth is the hieſt thing that man may kepe.
But with that word he braſt anon to wepe,
And ſayd; I you forbede, on peine of deth,
That never while you laſteth lif or breth
To no wight tell ye this miſaventure;
As I may beſt I wol my wo endure:
Ne make no contenance of hevineſſe,
That folk of you may demen harme or geſſe.
And forth he cleped a ſquier and a maid.
Goth forth anon with Dorigene, he ſaid,
And bringeth hire to ſwiche a place anon.
They take hir leve, and on hir way they gon:
But they ne wiſten why ſhe thider went;
She n'olde no wight tellen hire entent.
This ſquier which that highte Aurelius,
On Dorigene that was ſo amorous,
Of aventure happed hire to mete
Amid the toun, right in the quickeſt ſtrete,
As ſhe was boun to go the way forthright
Toward the gardin, ther as ſhe had hight;
And he was to the gardinward alſo,
For wel he ſpied whan ſhe wolde go
Out of hire hous to any maner place:
But thus they met of aventure or grace,
And he ſalueth hire with glad entent,
And axeth of hire whiderward ſhe went.
And ſhe anſwered half as ſhe were mad,
Unto the gardin, as myn huſbond bad,
My trouthe for to hold, alas! alas!
Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,
And in his herte had gret compaſſion
Of hire, and of hire lamentation,
And of Arviragus, the worthy knight,
That bad hire holden all that ſhe had hight,

So loth him was his wif ſhuld bréke hire trouthe;
And in his herte he caught of it gret routhe,
Conſidering the beſt on every ſide,
That fro his luſt yet were him lever abide
Than do ſo high a cherliſh wretchedneſſe
Ageins fraunchiſe and alle gentilleſſe
For which in few wordes ſayd he thus:
Madame, ſay to your Lord Arviragus
That ſin I ſee the grete gentilleſſe
Of him, and eke I ſee wel your diſtreſſe,
That him were lever have ſhame (and that were routhe)
Than ye to me ſhuld breken thus your trouthe,
I hadde wel lever ever to ſuffren wo
Than to depart the love betwix you two.
I you releſe, Madame; into your hond
Quit every ſeurement and every bond
That ye han made to me as herebeforne
Sin thilke time that ye were yborne.
Have here my trouthe, I ſhal you never repreve
Of no beheſt; and here I take my leve
As of the treweſt and the beſte wif
That ever yet I knew in all my lif.
But every wif beware of hire beheſt;
On Dorigene remembreth at the leſt.
Thus can a ſquier don a gentil dede
As wel as can a knight, withouten drede.
She thanketh him upon hire knees bare,
And home unto hire huſbond is ſhe fare,
And told him all as ye han herd me ſayd;
And, truſteth me, he was ſo wel apayd
That it were impoſſible me to write.
What ſhuld I lenger of this cas endite?
Arviragus and Dorigene his wif
In ſoveraine bliſſe leden forth hir lif,
Never eft ne was ther anger hem betwene;
He cheriſhed hire as though ſhe were a quene,
And ſhe was to him trewe for evermore.
Of thiſe two folk ye get of me no more.
Aurelius, that his coſt hath all forlorne,
Curſeth the time that ever he was borne.
Alas! quod he, alas that I behight
Of pured gold a thouſand pound of wight
Unto this philoſophre! how ſhal I do?
I ſee no more but that I am fordo.
Min heritage mote I nedes ſell,
And ben a beggar here I n'ill not dwell,
And ſhamen all my kinrede in this place,
But I of him may geten better grace:
But natheles I wol of him aſſay
At certain daies yere by yere to pay,
And thanke him of his grete curteſie.
My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol not lie.
With herte ſore he goth unto his cofre,
And broughte gold unto this philoſophre,
The value of five hundred pound I geſſe,
And him beſecheth of his gentilleſſe
To graunt him daies of the remenaunt,
And ſayde; Maiſter, I dare wel make avaunt
I failled never of my trouthe as yet;
For ſikerly my dette ſhal be be quit
Towardes you, how ſo that ever I fare
To gon a begging in my kirtle bare:
But wold ye vouchen ſauf upon ſeurtee
Two yere or three for to reſpiten me,
Than were I wel, for elles mote I ſell
Min heritage; ther is no more to tell.
This philoſophre ſobrely anſwerd,
And ſaied thus, whan he thiſe wordes herd;
Have I not holden covenant to thee?
Yes, certes, wel and trewely, quod he.
Haſt thou not had thy lady as thee liketh?
No, no, quod he, and ſorwefully he ſiketh.
What was the cauſe? tell me if thou can.
Aurelius his tale anon began,
And told him all as ye han herd before;
It nedeth not reherſe it any more.
He ſayd, Arviragus of gentilleſſe
Had lever die in ſorwe and in diſtreſſe
Than that his wif were of hire trouthe fals.
The ſorwe of Dorigene he told him als,
How loth hire was to ben a wicked wif,
And that ſhe lever had loſt that day hire lif;
And that her trouth ſhe ſwore thurgh innocence;
She never erſt hadde herd ſpeke of apparence:
That made me han of hire ſo gret pitee,
And right as freely as he ſent hire to me
As freely ſent I hire to him again.
This is all and ſom; ther n'is no more to ſain.
The philoſophre anſwerd; Leve brothre,
Everich of you did gentilly to other:
Thou art a ſquier, and he is a knight,
But God forbede, for his bliſsful might,
But if a clerk could don a gentil dede
As wel as any of you, it is no drede.
Sire, I releſe thee thy thouſand pound,
As thou right now were crope out of the ground,
Ne never er now ne haddeſt knowen me:
For, Sire, I wol not take a peny of thee
For all my craft, ne nought for my travaille:
Thou haſt ypaied wel for my vitaille.
It is ynough, and farewel, have good day.
And toke his hors, and forth he goth his way.
Lordings, this queſtion wold I axen now,
Which was the moſte free, as thinketh you?
Now telleth me or that ye further wende,
I can no more, my Tale is at an ende.

THE DOCTOURES PROLOGUE.

Yt, let that paſſen, quod our Hoſte, as now.
Sire Doctour of Phyſike, I prey you,
Tell us a Tale of ſom honeſt matere.

It ſhal be don, if that ye wol it here,
Said this Doctour, and his Tale began anon.
Now, good men, quod he, herkeneth everich on.

THE DOCTOURES TALE*.

Thre was, as telleth Titus Livius,
A knight that cleped was Virginius,
Fulfilled of honour and worthineſſe,
And ſtrong of frendes, and of gret richeſſe.
This knight a doughter hadde by his wif;
No children had he mo in all his lif.
Faire was this maid in excellent beautee
Aboven every wight that man may ſee,
For Nature hath with ſoveraine diligence
Yformed hire in ſo gret excellence
As though ſhe wolde ſayn, Lo, I Nature,
Thus can I forme and peint a creature,
Whan that me liſt: who can me contrefete?
Pigmalion? not though he ay forge and bete,
Or grave, or peinte; for I dare wel ſain
Apelles, Xeuxis, ſhulden werche in vain
Other to grave, or peinte, or forge, or bete,
If they preſumed me to countrefete:
For he that is the former principal
Hath maked me his vicaire general
To forme and peinten earthly creatures
Right as me liſt; and eche thing in my cure is
Under the mone that may wane and waxe;
And for my werk right nothing wol I axe:
My lord and I ben ful of on accord;
I made hire to the worſhip of my lord,
So do I all min other creatures,
What colour that they han or what figures.
Thus ſemeth me that Nature wolde ſay.
This maid of age twelf yere was and twway
In which that nature hadde ſwiche delit;
For right as ſhe can peint a lily whit
And red a roſe, right with ſwiche peinture
She peinted hath this noble creature
Er ſhe was borne upon hire lymmes free,
Wheras by right ſwiche colours ſhulden be;
And Phebus died hath hire treſſes grete
Like to the ſtremes of his burned hete.
And if that excellent were hire beautee,
A thouſand fold more vertuous was ſhe,
In hire ne lacked no condition
That is to preiſe, as by diſcretion.
As wel in goſt as body chaſt was ſhe,
For which ſhe floured in virginitee
With all humilitee and abſtinence,
With all attemperance and patience,
With meaſure eke of bering and array.
Diſcrete ſhe was in anſwering alway,
Though ſhe were wiſe as Pallas, dare I ſain,
Hire facounde eke ful womanly and plain:
No countrefeted terms hadde ſhe
To ſemen wiſe, but after hire degree
She ſpake, and all hire werdes more and leſſe
Souning in vertue and in gentilleſſe.

* Virginius ſlayeth his only daughter rather than ſhe ſhal be defiled by the letcherous Judge Appius. ſt.

Shamefaſt ſhe was in maidens ſhamefaſtneſſe,
Conſtant in herte out of idel beſineſſe
To drive hire out of idel ſlogardie.
Bacchus had of hire mouth right no maiſtrie,
For wine and youthe don Venus encreſe,
As men in fire wol caſten oile and greſe.
And of hire owen vertue unconſtreined
She hath hireſelf ful often ſike yfeined,
For that ſhe wolde fleen the compagnie
Wher likely was to treten of folie,
As is at feſtes, at revels, and at dances
That ben occaſions of daliances.
Swiche thinges maken children for to be
To ſone ripe and bold, as men may ſee,
Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore;
For al to ſone may ſhe lernen lore
Of boldneſſe whan ſhe woxen is a wif.
And ye maiſtreſſes in your olde lif,
That lordes doughters han in governance,
Ne taketh of my wordes diſpleſance:
Thinketh that ye ben ſet in governinges
Of lordes doughters only for two thinges,
Other for ye han kept your honeſtee,
Or elles for ye han fallen in freeltee,
And knowen wel ynough the olde dance,
And han forſaken fully ſwiche meſchance
For evermo; therefore for Chriſtes ſake
To teche hem vertue loke that ye ne ſlake.
A theef of veniſon, that hath forlaſt
His likerouſneſſe and all his olde craft,
Can kepe a foreſt beſt of any man:
Now kepeth hem wel, for if ye wol ye can.
Loke wel that unto no vice aſſent,
Leſt ye be damned for your wikke entent,
For who ſo doth a traytour is certain:
And taketh kepe of that I ſhal you ſain;
Of alle treſon ſoveraine peſtilence
Is whan a wight betrayeth innocence.
Ye fathers, and ye mothers eke alſo,
Though ye han children, be it on or mo,
Your is the charge of all hir ſurveiance,
While that they ben under your governance:
Beth ware that by enſample of your living,
Or by your negligence in chaſtiſing,
That they ne periſh, for I dare wel ſaye
If that they don ye ſhul it dere abeye.
Under a ſhepherd ſoft and negligent
The wolf hath many a ſhepe and lamb to-rent.
Sufficeth this enſample now as here,
For I mote turne agen to my matere.
This maid, of which I tell my Tale expreſſe,
She kept hireſelf, hire neded no maiſtreſſe,
For in hire living maidens mighten rede,
As in a book, every good word and dede
That longeth to a maiden vertuous:
She was ſo prudent and ſo bounteous,
For which the fame out ſprong on every ſide
Both of hire beautee and hire bountee wide,
That thurgh the lond they preiſed hire ech one
That loved vertue, ſauf Envie alone,
That ſory is of other mannes wele,
And glad is of his ſorwe and his unhele.
The Doctour maketh this deſcriptioun.
This maiden on a day went in the toun
Toward a temple, with hire mother dere,
As is of young maidens the manere.
Now was ther than a juſtice in that toun
That governour was of that regioun;
And ſo befell this juge his eyen caſt
Upon this maid, aviſing hire ful faſt
As ſhe came forth by ther this juge ſtood;
Anon his his herte changed and his mood,
So was he caught with beautee of this maid,
And to himſelf ful prively he ſaid,
This maiden ſhal be min for any man.
Anon the fend into his herte ran,
And taught him ſodenly that he by ſleight
This maiden to his purpos winnen might;
For certes by no force ne by no mede
Him thought the was not able for to ſpede;
For ſhe was ſtrong of frendes, end eke ſhe
Confermed was in ſwiche ſoveraine bountee
That wel he wiſt he might hire never winne
As for to make hire with hire body ſinne:
For which with gret deliberatioun
He ſent after a cherl was in the toun,
The which he knew for ſotil and for bold.
This juge unto this cherl his tale hath told
In ſecree wiſe, and made him to enſure
He ſhulde tell it to no creature,
And if he did he ſhulde leſe his hede.
And whan aſſented was this curſed rede,
Glad was the juge, and maked him gret chere,
And yaf him yeftes precious and dere
Whan ſhapen was all hir conſpiracie
Fro point to point, how that his lecherie
Parformed ſhulde be ful ſotilly,
As ye ſhul here it after openly,
Home goth this cherl, that highte Claudius;
This falſe juge, that highte Appius,
(So was his name, for it is no fable,
But knowen for an hiſtorial thing notable;
The ſentence of it ſoth is out of doute)
This falſe juge goth now faſt aboute
To haſten his delit all that he may.
And ſo befell, ſone after on a day
This falſe juge, as telleth us the ſtorie,
As he was wont, ſat in his conſiſtorie,
And yaf his domes upon ſondry cas,
This falſe cherl came forth a ful gret pas,
And ſaide; Lord, if that it be your will,
As doth me right upon this pitous bill,
In which I plaine upon Virginius;
And if that he wol ſayn it is not thus,
I wol it preve, and finden good witneſſe
That ſoth is that my bille wol expreſſe.
The juge anſwerd, Of this in his abſence
I may not yeve diffinitif ſentence.
Let don him call, and I wol gladly here:
Thou ſhalt have right and wrong as now here.
Virginius came to wete the juges will,
And right anon was red this curſed bill;
The ſentence of it was as ye ſhul here.
To you my Lord Sire Appius ſo dere
Sheweth your poure ſervant Claudius
How that a knight called Virginius
Agein the lawe, agein all equitee,
Holdeth, expreſſe agein the will of me,

My ſervant which that is my thral by right,
Which from min hous was ſtolen on a night
While that ſhe was ful yong; I wol it preve
By witneſſe, Lord, ſo that it you not greve:
She n'is his doughter nought, what ſo he ſay;
Wherfore to you, my Lord the juge, I pray;
Yeld me my thral, if that it be your will.
Lo, this was all the ſentence of his bill.
Virginius gan upon the cherl behold;
But haſtily er he his tale told,
And wold han preved it as ſhuld a knight,
And eke by witneſſing of many a wight
That all was falſe that ſaid his adverſary,
This curſed juge wolde nothing tary,
Ne here a word more of Virginius,
But yave his jugement, and ſaide thus:
I deme anon this cherl his ſervant have;
Thou ſhalt no lenger in thin hous hire have;
Go bring hire forth, and put hire in our ward:
The cherl ſhal have his thral; thus I award.
And whan this worthy knight Virginius,
Thurgh ſentence of this juſtice Appius,
Muſte by force his dere doughter yeven
Unto the juge, in lecherie to liven,
He goth him home, and ſet him in his hall,
And let anon his dere doughter call;
And with a face ded as aſhen cold
Upon hire humble face he gan behold,
With fadres pitee ſtiking thurgh his herte,
Al wold he from his purpos not converte,
Doughter, quod he, Virginia by thy name,
Ther ben two waies, other deth or ſhame,
That thou muſt ſuffre, alas that I was bore!
For never thou deſervedeſt wherfore
To dien with a ſwerd or with a knif.
O dere doughter, ender of my lif!
Which I have foſtred up with ſwiche pleſance
That thou were never out of my remembrance;
O doughter! which that art my laſte wo,
And in my lif my laſte joye alſo;
O gemme of chaſtitee! in patience
Take thou thy deth, for this is my ſentence;
For love and not for hate thou muſt be ded;
My pitous hond muſt ſmiten of thin hed.
Alas that ever Appius thee ſay!
Thus hath he falſely judged thee to-day.
And told hire all the cas, as ye before
Han herd; it needeth not to tell it more.
O mercy, dere father! quod this maid.
And with that word ſhe both hire armes laid
About his necke, as ſhe was wont to do,
(The teres braſt out of his eyen two)
And ſaid, O goode father ſhal I die?
Is ther no grace? is ther no remedie?
No certes, dere doughter min! quod he.
Than yeve me leiſer, father min quod ſhe,
My deth for to complaine a litel ſpace;
For parde Jepte yave his doughter grace
For to complaine or he hire ſlow, alas!
And God it wot nothing was hire treſpas,
But for ſhe ran hire father firſt to ſee,
To welcome him with gret ſolempnitee.
And with that word ſhe fell aſwoun anon,
And after, whan hire ſwouning was agon,
She riſeth up, and to hire father ſaid;
Bleſſed be God that I ſhal die a maid!
Yeve me my deth or that I have a ſhame:
Doth with your child your wille a Goddes name.
And with that word ſhe praied him ful oft
That with his ſwerd he wolde ſmite hire ſoft;
And with that word aſwoune again ſhe fell.
Hire father, with ful forweful herte and will,
Hire hed of ſmote, and by the top it hent,
And to the juge he gan it to preſent,
As he ſat yet in dome in conſiſtorie.
And whan the juge it ſaw, as faith the ſtorie,
He bad to take him and anhang him faſt:
But right anon a thouſand peple in thraſt
To ſave the knight for routh and for pitee,
For knowen was the falſe iniquitee.
The peple anon had ſuſpect in this thing,
By maner of the cherles chalenging,
That it was by the aſſent of Appius
They wiſten well that he was lecherous:
For which unto this Appius they gon,
And caſte him in a priſon right anon,
Whereas he ſlow himſelf; and Claudius,
That ſervant was unto this Appius,
Was demed for to hang upon a tree,
But that Virginius of his pitee
So prayed for him that he was exiled,
And elles certes had he ben beguiled;
The remenant were anhanged, more and leſſe,
That were conſentant of this curſedneſſe.
Here men may ſee how ſin hath his merite;
Beth were, for no man wot whom God wol ſmite
In no degree, ne in which maner wiſe
The worme of conſcience may agriſe
Of wicked lif, though it ſo privee be
That no man wote therof ſaue God and he;
For be he lewed man or elles lered
He n'ot how ſone that he ſhal ben afered:
Therfore I rede you this conſeil take.
Forſaketh ſinne or ſinne you forſake.

THE PARDONERES PROLOGUE.

Our Hoſte gan to ſwere as he were wood,
Harrow! (quod he) by nailes and by blood
This was a falſe cherl and a falſe juſtice.
As ſhameful deth as herte can diviſe
Come to thiſe juges and hir advocas.
Algate this fely maide is ſlain, alas!
Alas! to dere abought ſhe hire beautee;
Wherfore I ſay that all day man may ſee
That yeftes of Fortune and of Nature
Ben cauſe of deth to many a creature.
Hire beautee was hire deth, I dare wel ſain:
Alas! ſo pitouſly as ſhe was ſlain.
Of bothe yeſtes that I ſpeke of now
Men hain ful often more for harm than prow.
But trewely, min owen maiſter dere,
This was a pitous Tale for to here;
But natheles paſſe over is no force.
I pray to God to ſave thy gentil corps,
And eke thyn urinals and thy jordanes,
Thin Ypocras, and eke thy Galianes,
And every boiſt ful of thy letuarie
God bleſſe hem and our Lady Seint Marie.
So mote I the thou art a propre man,
And like a prelat, by Seint Ronian.
Said I not wel? I cannot ſpeke in terme;
But wel I wot thou doſt min herte to erme,
That I have almoſt caught a cardiacle:
By *corpus Domini* but I have triacle,
Or elles a dranght of moiſt and corny ale,
Or but I here anon a mery Tale,
Myn herte is loſt for pitee of this maid.
Thou *bel amy*, thou Pardoner he ſaid,
Tel us ſom mirth of japes right anon.
It ſhal be don, quod he, by Seint Ronion.
But firſt (quod he) here at this ale-ſtake
I wol both drinke and biten on a cake.
But right anon thiſe gentiles gan to crie;
Nay, let him tell us of no ribaudrie:
Tell us ſom moral thing, that we mow lere
Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly here.
I graunte ywis, quod he; but I muſt thinke
Upon ſom honeſt thing while that I drinke.

THE PARDONERES TALE*.

Lordings, quod he, in chirche whan I preche,
I peine me to have an hautein ſpeche,
And ring it out as round as goth a bell,
For I can all by rote that I tell.
My teme is alway on, and ever was,
Radix malorum eſt cupiditas.
Firſt I pronounce whennes that I come,
And than my bulles ſhew I alle and ſome:
Our liege lordes ſele on my patente
That ſhew I firſt, my body to warrente,
That no man be ſo bold, ne preeſt ne clerk,
Me to diſturbe of Criſtes holy werk:
And after that than tell I forth my tales.
Bulles of popes and of cardinales,
Of patriarkes and biſhoppes, I ſhewe,
And in Latin I ſpeke a wordes fewe
To ſaffron with my predication,
And for to ſtere men to devotion:
Than ſhew I forth my longe criſtal ſtones,
Ycrammed ful of cloutes and of bones;
Relikes they ben, as wenen they echon.
Than have I in laton a ſhulder bone
Which that was of an holy lewes ſhepe.
Good men, ſay I, take of my wordes kepe;
If that this bone be waſhe in any well,
If cow, or calf, or ſhepe, or oxe, ſwell

* A company of riotors conſpire to kill Death, who killeth them one after another. *Speight.*

That any worm hath ete, or worm ſtonge,
Take water of that well and waſh his tonge,
And it is hole anon; and forthermore,
Of pockes and of ſcab, and every ſore,
Shal every ſhepe be hole that of this well
Drinketh a draught: take kepe of that I tell.
If that the good man that the beſtes oweth
Wol every weke, er that the cok him croweth,
Faſting ydrinken of this well a draught,
As thilke holy Jew our eldres taught,
His beſtes and his ſtore ſhal multiplie:
And, Sires, alſo it heleth jalouſie;
For though a man be falle in jalous rage,
Let maken with this water his potage,
And never ſhal he more his wif miſtriſt,
Though he the ſoth of hire defaute wiſt,
Al had ſhe taken preeſtes two or three.
Here is a mitaine eke that ye may ſee:
He that his hand wol put in this mitaine
He ſhal have multiplying of his graine,
Whan he hath ſowen, be it whete or otes,
So that he offer pens or elles grotes.
And men and women, o thing warne I you;
If any wight be in this chirche now
That hath don ſinne horrible, ſo that he
Dare not for ſhame of it yſhriven be;
Or any woman, be ſhe yong or old,
That hath ymade hire huſbond cokewold,
Swiche folk ſhul han no power ne no grace
To offer to my relikes in this place:
And who ſo findeth him out of ſwiche blame
He wol come up and offer in Goddes name,
And I aſſoyle him by the auctoritee
Which that by bulle ygranted was to me.
By this gaude have I wonnen yere by yere
An hundred mark ſin I was Pardonere.
I ſtonde like a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed peple is doun yſet
I preche ſo as ye han herd before,
And tell an hundred falſe japes more:
Than peine I me to ſtretchen forth my necke,
And eſt and weſt upon the peple I becke,
As doth a dove ſitting upon a berne:
Myn hondes and my tonge gon ſo yerne,
That it is joye to ſee my buſineſſe.
Of avarice and ſwiche curſedneſſe
Is all my preching, for to make hem frée
To yeve hir pens, and namely unto me;
For min entente is not but for to winne,
And nothing for correction of ſinne:
I recke never whan that they be beried
Though that hir ſoules gon a blake beried.
For certes many a predication
Cometh oft time of evil entention;
Som for pleſance of folk and flaterie,
To ben avanced by hypocriſie;
And ſom for vaine glorie, and ſom for hate:
For whan I dare non other wayes debate,
Than wol I ſting him with my tonge ſmerte
In preching, ſo that he ſhal not aſterte
To ben defamed falſely, if that he
Hath treſpaſed to my brethren or to me:
For though I telle not his propre name,
Men ſhal wel knowen that it is the ſame,
By ſignes, and by other circumſtances.
Thus quite I folk that don us diſpleſances,
Thus ſpit I out my venime under hewe
Of holineſſe, to ſeme holy and trewe.
But ſhortly min entente I wol deviſe;
I preche of nothing but for covetiſe,
Therfore my teme is yet, and ever was,
Radix malorum eſt cupiditas.
Thus can I preche again the ſame vice
Which that I uſe, and that is avarice.
But though myſelf be gilty in that ſinne,
Yet can I maken other folk to twinne
From avarice, and ſore hem to repente;
But that is not my principal entente:
I preche nothing but for covetiſe.
Of this matere it ought ynough ſuffiſe.
Than tell I hem enſamples many on
Of olde ſtories longe time agon,
For lewed peple loven tales olde;
Swiche thinges can they wel report and holde.
What? trowen ye that whiles I may preche
And winnen gold and ſilver for I teche,
That I wol live in poverte wilfully?
Nay, nay; I thought it never trewely:
For I wol preche and beg in ſondry londes,
I wol not do no labour with min hondes,
Ne make baſkettes for to live therby,
Becauſe I wol not beggen idelly.
I wol non of the apoſtles contrefete;
I wol have money, wolle, cheſe, and whete,
Al were it yeven of the poureſt page,
Or of the poureſt widewe in a village,
Al ſhulde hire children ſterven for famine:
Nay, I wol drinke the licour of the vine,
And have a joly wenche in every toun.
But herkeneth, Lordings, in concluſioun,
Your liking is that I ſhall tell a Tale.
Now I have dronke a draught of corny ale,
By God I hope I ſhal you tell a thing
That ſhal by reſon ben at your liking;
For though myſelf be a ful vicious man,
A moral Tale yet I you tellen can,
Which I am wont to prechen for to winne.
Now hold your pees, my Tale I wol beginne.
In Flandres whilom was a compagnie
Of yonge folk that haunteden folie,
As hazard, riot, ſtewes, and tavernes,
Wheras with harpes, lutes, and giternes,
They dance and plaie at dis bothe day and night,
And ete alſo and drinke over hir might,
Thurgh which they don the devil ſacrifice,
Within the devils temple, in curſed wiſe,
By ſuperfluitee abhominable.
Hir othes ben ſo gret and ſo damnable
That it is griſly for to here hem ſwere.
Our bliſful Lordes body they to-tere;
Hem thought the Jewes rent him not ynough;
And eche of hem at others ſinne lough.
And right anon in comen tombeſteres
Fetis and ſmale, and yonge fruiteſteres,
Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
Which ben the veray devils officeres,
To kindle and blow the fire of lecherie,
That is annexed unto glutonie.

The holy writ take I to my witneſſe
That luxurie is in wine and dronkeneſſe.
Lo, how that dronken Loth unkindely
Lay by his daughters two unwetingly;
So dronke he was he n'iſte what he wrought.
Herodes, who ſo wel the ſtories fought,
Whan he of wine replete was at his feſte,
Right at his owen table he yave his heſte
To ſleen the Baptiſt John ful gilteles.
Seneca ſaith a good word doutcles;
He ſaith he can no difference find
Betwix a man that is out of his mind
And a man whiche that is dronkelew;
But that woodneſſe, yfallen in a ſhrew,
Perſevereth lenger than doth dronkeneſſe.
O glotonie! full of curſedneſſe,
O cauſe firſt of our confuſion!
O original of our damnation!
Til Criſt had bought us with his blood again:
Loketh how dere, ſhortly for to ſain,
Abought was thilke curſed vilanie:
Corrupt was all this world for glotonie.
Adam our father, and his wif alſo,
Fro Paradis to labour and to wo
Were driven for that vice, it is no drede;
For while that Adam faſted, as I rede,
He was in Paradis, and whan that he
Ete of the fruit defended on a tree,
Anon he was out caſt to wo and peine.
O glotonie! on thee wel ought us plaine.
O! wiſt a man how many maladies
Folwen of exceſſe and of glotonies,
He wolde ben the more meſurable
Of his diete, ſitting at his table.
Alas! the ſhorte throte, the tendre mouth,
Maketh that eſt and weſt, and north and ſouth,
In erthe, in air, in water, men to ſwinke
To gete a gloten deintee mete and drinke.
Of this matere, O Poule! wel canſt thou trete:
Mete unto wombe, and wombe eke unto mete,
Shal God deſtroien bothe, as Paulus ſaith.
Alas! a foule thing is it by my faith,
To ſay this word, and fouler is the dede,
Whan man ſo drinketh of the white and rede
That of his throte he maketh his privee
Thurgh thilke curſed ſuperfluitee.
The apoſtle ſaith weping ful pitouſly,
Ther walken many of which you told have I;
I ſay it now weping with pitous vois
That they ben enemies of Criſtes crois,
Of whiche the end is deth; womb is hir God:
O wombe, o belly! ſtinking is thy cod,
Fulfilled of dong and of corruptioun;
At either end of thee foule is the ſoun.
How gret labour and coſt is thee to find!
Thiſe cokes how they ſtamp, and ſtreine, and grind,
And turnen ſubſtance into accident,
To fulfill all thy likerous talent!
Out of the hardy bones knocken they
The mary, for they caſten nought away
That may go thurgh the gullet ſoft and ſote:
Of ſpicerie, of leef, of barke, and rote,
Shal ben his ſauſe ymaked, by delit
To make him yet a newer appetit:
But certes he that haunteth ſwiche delices
Is ded while that he liveth in tho vices.
A lecherous thing is wine, and dronkeneſſe
Is ful of ſtriving and of wretchedneſſe.
O dronken man! disfigured is thy face,
Sour is thy breth, foul art thou to enbrace,
And thurgh thy dronken noſe ſemeth the ſoun
As though thou ſaideſt ay Sampſoun! Sampſoun!
And yet, God wot, Sampſoun dronk never no wine.
Thou faleſt as it were a ſtiked ſwine;
Thy tonge is loſt, and all thin honeſt cure,
For dronkeneſſe is veray ſepulture
Of mannes wit and his diſcretion.
In whom that drinke hath domination
He can no conſeil kepe, it is no drede.
Now kepe you fro the white and fro the rede,
And namely fro the white wine of Lepe,
That is to ſell in Fiſhſtrete and in Chepe.
This wine of Spaigne crepeth ſubtilly
In other wines growing faſte by,
Of which ther riſeth ſwiche ſumoſitee,
That whan a man hath dronken draughtes three,
And weneth that he be at home in Chepe,
He is in Spaigne, right at the toun of Lepe,
Not at the Rochell, ne at Burdeux toun,
And thanne wol he ſay Sampſoun! Samſoun!
But herkeneth, Lordings, o word, I you pray,
That all the ſoveraine actes, dare I ſay,
Of victories in the Olde Teſtament,
Thurgh veray God that is omnipotent,
Were don in abſtinence and in prayere;
Loketh the Bible, and there ye mow it lere.
Loke, Attila the grete conquerour
Died in his ſlepe with ſhame and diſhonour,
Bleding ay at his noſe in dronkeneſſe:
A capitaine ſhulde live in ſobreneſſe.
And over all this aviſeth you right wel
What was commanded unto Lamuel;
Not Samuel, but Lamuel, ſay I.
Redeth the Bible, and find it expreſly
Of wine yeving to hem that have juſtice.
No more of this, for it may wel ſuffice.
And now that I have ſpoke of glotonie,
Now wol I you defenden haſardrie.
Haſard is veray moder of leſinges,
And of deceite and curſed forſweringes,
Blaſpheming of Criſt, manſlaughter, and waſt alſo
Of catel, and of time; and forthermo
It is repreve, and contrary of honour
For to ben hold a commun haſardour,
And ever the higher he is of eſtat
The more he is holden deſolat.
If that a prince uſeth haſarderie,
In alle governance and policie
He is, as is by commun opinion,
Yhold the leſſe in reputation.
Stilbon, that was a wiſe embaſſadour,
Was ſent to Corinth with ful gret honour
Fro Calidone, to maken hem alliance;
And whan he came he happed him *par chance*
That all the greteſt that were of that lond
Yplaying atte hazard he hem fond;
For which, as ſone as that it mighte be,
He ſtale him home agein to his contree,

And sayde ther, I wol not lese my name,
Ne wol not take on me so gret defame,
You for to allie unto non hasardours:
Sendeth som other wife embassadours,
For by my trouthe me were liver die
Than I you shuld to hasardours allie;
For ye, that ben so glorious in honours,
Shal not allie you to non hasardours,
As by my wille, ne as by my tretee.
This wise philosophre thus sayd he.
Loke eke how to the King Demetrius
The King of Parthes, as the book sayth us,
Sent him a pair of dis of gold in scorne,
For he had used hasard therbeforne,
For which he held his glory and his renoun
At no value or reputatioun.
Lordes may finden other maner play
Honest ynough to drive the day away.
Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
A word or two, as olde bookes trete.
Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
And false swering is yet more reprevable.
The highe God forbod swering at al,
Witnesse on Mathew; but in special
Of swering sayth the holy Jeremie,
Thou shalt swere soth thin othes, and not lie,
And swere in dome, and eke in rightwisnesse,
But idel swering is a cursednesse.
Behold and see that in the firste table
Of highe Goddes hestes honourable
How that the second hest of him is this,
Take not my name in idle or amis.
Lo, rather he forbedeth swiche swering
Than homicide or many an other thing.
I say that as by ordre thus it standeth,
This knoweth he that his hestes understondeth
How that the second hest of God is that:
And forthermore, I wol the tell all plat
That vengeance shal not parten from his hous
That of his othes is outrageous.
By Goddes precious herte, and by his nailes,
And by the blood of Crist that is in Hailes,
Seven is my chance, and thin is cink and treye:
By Goddes armes if thou falsly pleye
This dagger shal thurghout thin herte go.
This fruit cometh of the bicched bones two,
Forswering, ire, falsenesse, and homicide.
Now for the love of Crist, that for us dide,
Leteth your othes bothe gret and smale.
But, Sires, now wol I telle you forth my Tale.
Thise riotoures three of which I tell,
Long erst er prime rong of any bell,
Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke,
And as they sat they herd a belle clinke
Before a corps was caried to his grave;
That on of hem gan callen to his knave,
Go bet, quod he, and axe redily
What corps is this that passeth here forth by,
And loke that thou report his name wel.
Sire, quod this boy, it needeth never a del;
It was me told or ye came here two houres;
He was parde an old felaw of youres,
And sodenly he was yslain to-night,
For dronke as he sat on his bench upright;
Ther came a privee theef men clepen Deth,
That in this contree all the peple sleth,
And with his spere he smote his herte atwo,
And went his way withouten wordes mo.
He hath a thousand slain this pestilence;
And, maister, or ye come in his presence
Me thinketh that it were ful necessarie
For to beware of swiche an adversarie:
Beth redy for to mete him evermore;
Thus taughte me my dame; I say no more.
By Seinte Marie, sayd this tavernere,
The child sayth soth, for he hath slain this yere,
Hens over a mile, within a gret village,
Both man and woman, child, and hyne and page,
I trowe his habitation be there:
To ben avised gret wisdom it were
Or that he did a man a dishonour.
Ye, Goddes armes, quod this riotour,
Is it swiche peril with him for to mete?
I shal him seke by stile and eke by strete,
I make a vow by Goddes digne bones.
Herkeneth, felawes, we three ben alle ones;
Let eche of us hold up his hond to other,
And eche of us becomen others brother,
And we wol slen this false traitour Deth:
He shal be slain, he that so many sleth,
By Goddes dignitee, or it be night.
Togeder han thise three hir trouthes plight
To live and dien eche of hem for other,
As though he were his owen boren brother.
And up they sterte al dronken in this rage,
And forth they gon towards that village
Of which the taverner had spoke beforn,
And many a grisly oth than have they sworn,
And Cristes blessed body they to-rent,
Deth shal be ded, if that we may him hent.
Whan they han gon not fully half a mile,
Right as they wold han troden over a stile,
An olde man and a poure with hem mette:
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,
And sayde thus; Now, Lordes, God you see!
The proudest of thise riotoures three
Answerd agen; What? cherl, with sory grace,
Why art thou all forwrapped save thy face?
Why livest thou so longe in so gret age?
This olde man gan loke in his visage,
And sayde thus; For I ne cannot finde
A man, though that I walked into Inde,
Neither in citee ne in no village,
That wolde change his youthe for min age;
And therefore mote I han min age still
As longe time as it is Goddes will.
Ne Deth, alas! ne wil not han my lif:
Thus walke I like a resteles caitif,
And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
I knocke with my staf erlich and late,
And say to hire; Leve mother, let me in.
Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin.
Alas! whan shul my bones ben at reste?
Mother, with you wold I changen my cheste,
That in my chambre longe time hath be,
Ye, for an heren clout to wrap in me.
But yet to me she wol not don that grace,
For which ful pale and welked is my face.

But, Sires, to you it is no curtesie
To speke unto an olde man vilanie,
But he trespase in word or elles in dede.
In holy writ ye moun yourselven rede
Ageins an olde man hore upon his hede
Ye shuld arise: therefore I yeve you rede
Ne doth unto an olde man non harm now,
No more than that ye wold a man did you
In age, if that ye may so long abide;
And God be with you where you go or ride:
I moste go thider as I have to go.

Nay, olde cherl, by God thou shalt not so,
Sayde this other hasardour anon;
Thou parteſt not so lightly, by Seint John.
Thou spake right now of thilke traitour Deth,
That in this contree all our frendes sleth;
Have here my trouth, as thou art his espie,
Tell wher he is, or thou shalt it abie
By God and by the holy sacrement,
For sothly thou art on of his assent
To slen us yonge folk, thou false these.

Now, Sires, quod he, if it be you so lese
To finden Deth, tourne up this croked way,
For in that grove I left him by my fay
Under a tree, and ther he wol abide,
Ne for your bost he wol him nothing hide.
Se ye that oke? right ther ye shuln him find.
God save you that bought agen mankind,
And you amende! Thus sayd this olde man.

And everich of thise riotoures ran
Til they came to the tree, and ther they found
Of Florens fine of gold ycoined round
Wel nigh and eighte bushels, as hem thought:
No lenger than after Dethe they sought,
But eche of hem so glad was of the sight,
For that the Florens ben so faire and bright,
That doun they sette hem by the precious hord:
The werste of hem he spake the firste word.

Brethren, quod he, take kepe what I shal say;
My wit is gret though that I bourde and play.
This tresour hath Fortune unto us yeven,
In mirth and jolitee our lif to liven,
And lightly as it cometh so wol we spend.
Ey, Goddes precious dignitee! who wend
To-day that we shuld han so faire a grace?
But might this gold be caried fro this place
Home to myn hous, or elles unto youres,
(For wel I wote that all this gold is oures)
Thanne were we in high felicitee;
But trewely by day it may not be,
Men wolden say that we were theeves strong,
And for our owen tresour don us hong.
This tresour must ycaried be by night
As wisely and as sleighly as it might;
Wherfore I rede that cut among us alle
We drawe, and let see wher the cut wol falle;
And he that hath the cut, with herte blith,
Shal rennen to the toun, and that ful swith,
And bring us bred and win ful prively;
And two of us shal kepen subtilly
This tresour wel; and if he wol not tarien,
Whan it is night we wol this tresour carien
By on assent wher as us thinketh best.

That on of hem the cut brought in his fest,
And bad him drawe, and loke wher it wold falle,
And it fell on the yongest of hem alle,
And forth toward the toun he went anon:
And al so sone as that he was agon
That on of hem spake thus unto that other;
Thou woteſt wel thou art my sworen brother,
Thy profite wol I tell the right anon.
Thou woſt wel that our felaw is agon,
And here is gold, and that ful gret plentee,
That shal departed ben among us three;
But natheles, if I can shape it so
That it departed were among us two,
Had I not don a frendes turn to thee?

That other answerd, I n'ot how that may be:
He wote wel that the gold is with us tweye.
What shuln we don, what shuln we to him seye?
Shal it be conseil? sayde the firste shrewe,
And I shal tellen thee in wordes fewe
What we shul don, and bring it wel aboute.

I grante, quod that other, out of doute,
That by my trouth I wol thee not bewreie.

Now, quod the first, thou woſt wel we ben
And tweie of us shal strenger be than on. [twein.
Loke, whan that he is set thou right anon
Arise, as though thou woldeſt with him play,
And I shal rive him thurgh the sides tway
While that thou strogleſt with him as in game,
And with thy dagger loke thou do the same;
And than shal this gold departed be,
My dere frend! betwixen thee and me;
Than moun we bothe our lustes al fulfille,
And play at dis right at our owen wille.
And thus accorded ben thise shrewes tweye
To slen the thridde, as ye han herde me seye.

This yongeſt, which that wente to the toun,
Ful oft in herte he rolleth up and doun
The beautee of thise Florens new and bright.
O Lord! quod he, if so were that I might
Have all this tresour to myself alone,
Ther n'is no man that liveth under the trone
Of God that shulde live so mery as I.
And at the last the fend our enemy
Putte in his thought that he shuld poison beye,
With which he mighte slen his felaws tweye:
For why? the fend fond him in swiche living
That he had leve to sorwe him to bring;
For this was outrely his ful entente,
To slen hem both and never to repente.
And forth he goth, no lenger wold he tary,
Into the toun unto a potecary,
And praied him that he wolde sell
Some poison, that he might his ratouns quell;
And eke ther was a polkat in his hawe
That, as he sayd, his capons had yslawe;
And fayn he wolde him wreken, if he might,
Of vermine that destroied hem by night.

The potecary answerd, Thou shalt have,
A thing, as wisly God my soule save,
In all this world ther n'is no creature
That ete or dronke hath of this confecture,
Not but the mountance of a corne of whete,
That he ne shal his lif anon forlete,
Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lesse while
Than thou wolt gon a pas not but a mile;

This poiſon is ſo ſtrong and violent.
This curſed man hath in his hond yhent
This poiſon in a box, and ſwithe he ran
Into the nexte ſtrete unto a man,
And borwed of him large botelles three,
And in the two the poiſen poured he;
The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke;
For all the night he ſhope him for to ſwinke
In carying of the gold out of that place.
And whan this riotour with ſory grace
Hath filled with win his grete bottelles three
To his felawes agen repaireth he.
What nedeth it thereof to ſermon more?
For right as they had caſt his deth before;
Right ſo they han him ſlain, and that anon.
And whan that this was don, thus ſpake that on;
Now let us ſit and drinke, and make us mery.
And afterward we wiln his body bery.
And with that word it happed him *par cas*
To take the botelle ther the poiſon was,
And dronke, and yave his felaw drinke alſo;
For which anon they ſtorven bothe two.
But certes I ſuppoſe that Avicenne
Wrote never in no canon ne in no fenne
Mo wonder ſignes of empoiſoning
Than had thiſe wretches two or hir ending.
Thus ended ben thiſe homicides two,
And eke the falſe empoiſoner alſo.
O curſedneſſe of all curſedneſſe;
O traitours homicide! o wickedneſſe!
O glotonie, luxurie, and haſardrie!
Thou blaſphemour of Criſt with vilanie
And othes grete of uſage and of pride!
Alas! mankinde, how may it betide
That to thy Creatour, which that thee wrought,
And with his precious herte-blood thee bought,
Thou art ſo falſe and ſo unkind? alas!
Now, good men, God foryeve you your treſpas,
And ware you fro the ſinne of avarice,
Min holy pardon may you all warice,
So that ye offre nobles or ſtarlinges,
Or elles ſilver broches, ſpones, ringes.
Boweth your hed under this holy bulle.
Cometh up, ye wives, and offreth of your wolle;
Your names I entre here in my roll anon;
Into the bliſſe of heven ſhul ye gon:
I you aſſoile by min high powere,
You that wiln offre, as clene and eke as clere
As ye were borne. Lo, Sires, thus I preche;
And Jeſu Criſt, that is our ſoules leche,
So graunte you his pardon to receive.
For that is beſt, I wol you not deceive.

But, Sires, o word forgate I in my Tale;
I have relikes and pardon in my male
As faire as any man in Engelond,
Which were me yeven by the Popes hond.
If any of you wol of devotion
Offren, and han my abſolution,
Cometh forth anon, and kneleth here adoun,
And mekely receiveth my pardoun;
Or elles taketh pardon as ye wende,
Al new and freſhe at every tounes ende,
So that ye offren alway newe and newe
Nobles or pens which that ben good and trewe.
It is an honour to everich that is here
That ye moun have a ſuffiſant Pardonere
To aſſoilen you in contree as ye ride
For aventures which that moun betide.
Paraventure ther may falle on or two
Doun of his hors, and breke his necke atwo.
Loke, which a ſeurtee is it to you alle
That I am in your felawſhip yfalle,
That may aſſoile you both more and leſſe,
Whan that the ſoule ſhal fro the body paſſe.
I rede that our Hoſte ſhal beginne,
For he is moſt envoluped in ſinne.
Come forth, Sire Hoſte, and offre firſt anon,
And thou ſhalt kiſſe the relikes everich on,
Ye for a grote: unbokel anon thy purſe.
Nay, nay, quod he; than have I Criſtes curſe.
Let be, quod he; it ſhal not be, ſo the ich.
Thou woldeſt make me kiſſe thin olde brech,
And ſwere it were a relike of a ſeint,
Though it were with thy foundement depeint;
But by the crois which that Seint Heleine fond
I wolde I had thin coilons in min hond
Inſtede of relikes or of ſeintuarie:
Let cut hem of, I wol thee help hem carie;
They ſhul be ſhrined in an hogges tord.
This Pardoner anſwered not a word;
So wroth he was no worde ne wolde he ſay.
Now, quod our Hoſte, I wol no lenger play
With thee, ne with non other angry man.
But right anon the worthy knight began,
(Whan that he ſaw that all the peple lough)
No more of this, for it is right ynough.
Sire Pardoner, be mery and glad of chere
And ye, Sire Hoſte, that ben to me ſo dere,
I pray you that ye kiſſe the Pardoner;
And, Pardoner, I pray thee draw thee ner,
And as we diden let us laugh and play.
Anon they kiſſed, and riden forth hir way.

THE SHIPMANNES PROLOGUE.

Our Hoſte upon his ſtirrops ſtode anon,
And ſaide, Good men, herkeneth everich on,
This was a thrifty Tale for the nones.
Sire Pariſh Preeſt, quod he, for Goddes bones
Tell us a Tale, as was thy forward yore;
I ſee wel that ye lerned men in lore
Can mochel good, by Goddes dignitee.
The Perſon him anſwerd, *Benedicite!*
What eileth the man ſo ſinfully to ſwere?
Our Hoſte anſwerd, O Jankin! be ye there?
Now good men, quod our Hoſte, herkneth to me?
I ſmell a Loller in the wind, quod he:
Abideth for Goddes digne paſſion,
For we ſhul han a predication:
This Loller here wol preechen us ſomwhat.
Nay, by my fathers ſoule, that ſhal be nat,
Sayde the Shipman; here ſhal he nat preche,
He ſhal no goſpel gloſen here ne teche.
We leven all in the gret God, quod he:
He wolde ſowen ſom difficultee,
Or ſpringen cockle in our clene corne;
And therefore Hoſte, I warne thee beforne.
My joly body ſhal a Tale telle,
And I ſhal clinken you ſo mery a belle
That I ſhal waken all this compagnie.
But it ſhal not ben of philoſophie,
Ne of phyſike, ne termes queinte of lawe;
Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe.

THE SHIPMANNES TALE.

A Marchant whilom dwelled at Seint Denyſe
That riche was, for which men held him wyſe:
A wif he had of excellent beautee,
And compaignable and revelous was ſhe,
Which is a thing that cauſeth more diſpence
Than worth is all the chere and reverence
That men hem don at feſtes and at dances:
Swiche ſalutations and contenances
Paſſen as doth a ſhadwe upon the wal;
But wo is him that payen mote for all.
The ſely huſbond algate he mote pay,
He mote us clothe and he mote us array
All for his owen worſhip richely,
In which array we dancen jolily:
And if that he may not paraventure,
Or elles luſt not ſwiche diſpence endure,
But thinketh it is waſted and yloſt,
Than mote another payen for our coſt,
Or lene us gold, and that is perilous.
This noble marchant held a worthy hous,
For which he had all day ſo gret repaire
For his largeſſe, and for his wif was faire,
That wonder is. But herkeneth to my Tale.
Amonges all thiſe geſtes gret and ſmale
Ther was a monk, a faire man and a bold,
I trow a thritty winter he was old,
That ever in on was drawing to that place.
This yonge monk, that was ſo faire of face,
Acquainted was ſo with this goode man,
Sithen that hire firſte knowlege began,
That in his hous as familier was he
As it poſſible is any frend to be.
And for as mochel us this goode man
And eke this monk of which that I began
Were bothe two yborne in o village,
The monk him claimeth as for coſinage,

And he again him ſayd not ones nay,
But was as glad therof as foule of day,
For to his herte it was a gret plesance.
Thus ben they knit with eterne alliance,
And eche of hem gan other for to enſure
Of brotherhed while that hir lif may dure.
Free was Dan John, and namely of diſpence,
As in that hous, and ful of diligence
To don plesance, and alſo gret coſtage:
He not forgate to yeve the leſte page
In all that hous, but after hir degree
He yave the lord and ſithen his meinee,
Whan that he came, ſom maner honeſt thing,
For which they were as glad of his coming
As foule is fayn whan that the ſonne up riſeth.
No more of this as now, for it ſufficeth.
But ſo befell this marchant on a day
Shope him to maken redy his array
Toward the toun of Brugges for to fare,
To byen ther a portion of ware,
For which he hath to Paris ſent anon
A meſſager, and praied hath Dan John
That he ſhuld come to Seint Denis, and plese
With him and with his wif a day or twein,
Or he to Bragges went, in all wiſe.
This noble monk, of which I you deviſe,
Hath of his abbot as him liſt licence,
(Becauſe he was a man of high prudence,
And eke an officer out for to ride
To ſeen hir granges and hir bernes wide)
And unto Seint Denis he cometh anon.
Who was ſo welcome as my Lord Dan John,
Our dere couſin, ful of curteſie?
With him he brought a jubbe of Malveſie,
And eke another ful of fine Vernage,
And volatile, as ay was his uſage.
And thus I let hem ete, and drinke, and pleye,
This marchant and this monk, a day or tweye.
The thridde day this marchant up ariſeth,
And on his nedes ſadly him aviſeth,
And up into his countour hous goth he,
To reken with himſelven, wel may be,
Of thilke yere how that it with him ſtood,
And how that he diſpended had his good,
And if that he encreſed were or non.
His bookes and his bagges many on
He layeth beforn him on his counting bord.
Ful riche was his treſour and his hord,
For which ful faſte his countour dore he ſhet,
And eke he n'olde no man ſhuld him let
Of his accountes for the mene time;
And thus he ſit til it was paſſed prime.
Dan John was riſen in the morwe alſo,
And in the gardin walked to and fro,
And hath his thinges ſayd ful curteiſly.
This goode wif came walking prively
Into the gardin ther he walketh ſoft,
And him ſaluseth, as ſhe hath don oft:
A maiden child came in hire compagnie,
Which as hire luſt ſhe may governe and gie,
For yet under the yerde was the maide.
O dere couſin min! Dan John, ſhe ſaide,
What aileth you ſo rathe for to ariſe?
Nece, quod he, it ought ynough ſuffiſe
Five houres for to ſlepe upon a night,
But it were for an olde appalled wight,
As ben thise wedded men, that lie and dare,
As in a fourme ſitteth a wery hare
Were al forſtraught with houndes gret and ſmale.
But, dere nece! why be ye ſo pale?
I trowe certes that our goode man
Hath you laboured ſith this night began,
That you were nede to reſten haſtily.
And with that word he lough ful merily,
And of his owen thought he wexe all red.
This faire wif gan for to ſhake hire hed,
And ſaied thus; Ye, God wote all, quod ſhe:
Nay, coſin min, it ſtant not ſo with me;
For by that God that yave me ſoule and lif
In all the reame of Fraunce is ther no wif
That laſſe luſt hath to that ſory play,
For I may ſing alas and wala wa
That I was borne! but to no wight (quod ſhe)
Dare I not tell how that it ſtant with me;
Wherfore I thinke out of this lond to wende,
Or elles of myſelf to make an ende,
So ful am I of drede and eke of care.
This monk began upon this wif to ſtare,
And ſayd, Alas! my nece, God forbede
That ye for any ſorwe or any drede
Fordo yourſelf: but telleth me your greſe,
Paraventure I may in your miſchefe
Conſeile or helpe; and therfore telleth me
All your annoy, for it ſhal ben ſecree;
For on my portos here I make an oth
That never in my lif, for leſe ne loth,
Ne ſhal I of no conſeil you bewray.
The ſame agen to you, quod ſhe, I ſay.
By God and by this portos I you ſwere,
Though men me wolden all in pieces tere,
Ne ſhall I never, for to gon to helle,
Bewrey o word of thing that ye me tell;
Nought for no cofinage ne alliance,
But verily for love and affiance.
Thus ben they ſworne, and hereupon they kiſte,
And eche of hem told other what hem liſte.
Coſin, quod ſhe, if that I had a ſpace,
As I have non, and namely in this place,
Than wold I tell a legend of my lif,
What I have ſuffred ſith I was a wif
With min huſbond, al be he your coſin.
Nay, quod this monk, by God and Seint Martin
He n'is no more coſin unto me
Than is the leef that hangeth on the tree;
I clepe him ſo, by Seint Denis of France,
To han the more cauſe of acquaintance
Of you, which I have loved ſpecially
Aboven alle women ſikerly;
This ſwere I you on my profeſſioun.
Telleth your greſe, leſt that he come adoun,
And haſteth you, and goth away anon.
My dere love! quod ſhe, o my Dan John!
Ful leſe were me this conſeil for to hide,
But out it mote, I may no lenger abide.
Myn huſbond is to me the werſte man
That ever was ſith that the world began:
But ſith I am a wif, it ſit not me
To tellen no wight of our privetee

Neither in bed ne in non other place;
God shilde I shulde it tellen for his grace:
A wif ne shal not sayn of hire husbond
But all honour, as I can understond;
Save unto you thus moch I tellen shal:
As helpe me God he is nought worth at all,
In no degree the value of a flie.
But yet me greveth most his nigardie:
And wel ye wot that women naturally
Desiren thinges sixe as well as I;
They wolden that hir husbondes shulden be
Hardy, and wise, and riche, and therto free,
And buxome to his wif, and fresh a-bedde.
But by that ilke Lord that for us bledde,
For his honour myselven for to array,
A Sonday next I muste nedes pay
An hundred franks, or elles am I lorne;
Yet were me lever that I were unborne
Than were don a sclandre or vilanie.
And if min husbond eke might it espie
I n'ere but lost; and therfore I you prey
Lene me this summe, or elles mote I dey:
Dan John, I say, lene me this hundred frankes;
Parde I wol not faille you my thankes,
If that you list to do that I you pray;
For at a certain day I wol you pay,
And do to you what plesance and service
That I may don, right as you list devise;
And but I do God take on me vengeance
As foul as ever had Genelon of France.
This gentil monk answered in this manere;
Now trewely, min owen lady dere!
I have (quod he) on you so grete a routhe,
That I you swere, and plighte you my trouthe,
That whan your husbond is to Flandres fare
I wol deliver you out of this care,
For I wol bringen you an hundred frankes.
And with that word he caught her by the flankes,
And hire embraced hard, and kiste hire oft.
Goth now your way, quod he, al stille and soft,
And let us dine as sone as that ye may,
For by my kalender it is prime of day:
Goth now, and beth as trewe as I shal be.
Now elles God forbede, Sire, quod she.
And forth she goth as joly as a pie,
And bad the cokes that they shuld hem hie,
So that men mighten dine, and that anon.
Up to hire husbond is this wif ygon,
And knocketh at his countour boldely.
Qui est la? quod he; Peter, it am I,
Quod she. What, Sire, how longe wol ye fast?
How longe time wol ye reken and cast
Your summes, and your bookes, and your thinges?
The devil have part of all swiche rekeninges!
Ye han ynough parde of Goddes sonde.
Come doun to-day, and let your bagges stonde.
Ne be ye not ashamed that Dan John
Shal fasting all this day elenge gon?
What! let us here a masse, and go we dine.
Wif, quod this man, litel canst thou divine
The curious besinesse that we have;
For of us chapmen, all so God me save,
And by that lord that cleped is Seint Ive,
Scarsly amonges twenty ten shal thrive
Continuelly, lasting unto oure age.
We moun wel maken chere and good visage,
And driven forth the world as it may be,
And kepen oure estat in privetee
Til we be ded, or elles that we play
A pilgrimage, or gon out of the way:
And therfore have I gret necessitee
Upon this queinte world to avisen me;
For evermore mote we stond in drede
Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhede.
To Flanders wol I go to-morwe at day,
And come agein as sone as ever I may,
For which, my dere wif! I thee beseke
As be to every wight buxom and meke,
And for to kepe our good be curious,
And honestly governe wel our hous.
Thou hast ynough in every maner wise
That to a thrifty housholde may suffice.
Thee lacketh non array ne no vitaille;
Of silver in thy purse shalt thou not faille.
And with that word his countour dore he shette,
And doun he goth; no lenger wold he lette;
And hastily a masse was ther saide,
And spedily the tables were ylaide,
And to the diner faste they hem spedde,
And richely this monk the chapman fedde.
And after diner Dan John sobrely
This chapman toke apart, and prively
He said him thus; Cosin, it stondeth so
That wel I see to Brugges ye wol go;
God and Seint Austin spede you and gide!
I pray you, cosin, wisely that ye ride;
Governeth you also of your diete
Attemprely, and namely in this hete.
Betwix us two nedeth no strange fare:
Farewel, cosin, God shilde you fro care!
If any thing ther be by day or night,
If it lie in my power and my might,
That ye me wol command in any wise,
It shal be don right as ye wol devise.
But o thing or ye go, if it may be;
I wolde prayen you for to lene me
An hundred frankes for a weke or tweye,
For certain bestes that I muste beye,
To storen with a place that is oures,
(God help me so I wold that it were youres)
I shal not faille surely of my day,
Not for a thousand frankes, a mile way.
But let this thing be secree, I you preye;
For yet to-night thise bestes mote I beye.
And fare now wel, min owen cosin dere!
Grand mercy of your cost and of your chere.
This noble marchant gentilly anon
Answerd and said, O cosin min, Dan John!
Now sikerly this is a smal requeste;
My gold is youres, whan that it you leste,
And not only my gold but my chaffare:
Take what you lest, God shilde that ye spare.
But o thing is, ye know it wel ynough
Of chapmen that hir money is hir plough:
We moun creancen while we han a name,
But goodles for to ben it is no game.
Pay it agen whan it lith in your ese:
After my might ful fayn wold I you plese.

Thise hundred frankes fet he forth anon,
And prively he toke hem to Dan John:
No wight in al this world wist of this lone
Saving this marchant and Dan John alone.
They drinke, and speke, and rome a while and pleye,
Til that Dan John rideth to his abbeye.

The morwe came, and forth this marchant rideth
To Flandres ward; his prentis wel him gideth
Til he came in to Brugges merily.
Now goth this marchant faste and besily
About his nede, and bieth, and creanceth;
He neither playeth at the dis ne danceth,
But as a marchant, shortly for to tell,
He ledeth his lif; and ther I let him dwell.

The Sonday next the marchant was agon
To Seint Denis ycomen is Dan John,
With croune and berde all fresh and newe yshave.
In all the hous ther n'as so litel a knave,
Ne no wight elles, that he n'as ful fain
For that my Lord Dan John was come again.
And shortly to the point right for to gon,
This faire wif accordeth with Dan John
That for thise hundred frankes he shuld all night
Haven hire in his armes bolt upright:
And this accord parformed was in dede.
In mirth all night a besy lif they lede
Til it was day, that Dan John yede his way,
And bad the meinie farewel, have good day:
For non of hem, ne no wight in the toun,
Hath of Dan John right non suspectioun:
And forth he rideth home to his abbey,
Or wher him liste; no more of him I sey.

This marchant, whan that ended was the faire,
To Seint Denis he gan for to repaire,
And with his wif he maketh feste and chere,
And telleth hire that chaffare is so dere
That nedes muste he make a chevisance
For he was bonde in a recognisance
To payen twenty thousand sheldes anon:
For which this marchant is to Paris gon
To borwe of certain frendes that he hadde
A certain frankes, and som with him he ladde.
And whan that he was come in to the toun,
For gret chiertee and gret affectioun
Unto Dan John he goth him first to pleye,
Not for to axe or borwe of him moneye,
But for to wete and seen of his welfare,
And for to tellen him of his chaffare,
As frendes don whan they ben mette in fere.

Dan John him maketh feste and mery chere,
And he him tolde agen ful specially
How he had wel ybought and graciously
(Thanked be God) all hole his marchandise,
Save that he must in alle manere wise
Maken a chevisance, as for his beste,
And than he shulde ben in joye and reste.
Dan John answered, Certes I am fain
That ye in hele be comen home again;
And if that I were riche, as have I blisse,
Of twenty thousand sheldes shuld ye not misse,
For ye so kindely this other day
Lente me gold, and as I can and may
I thanke you, by God and by Seint Jame.
But natheles I toke unto our dame,
Your wif, at home, the same gold again
Upon your benche; she wote it wel certain,
By certain tokenes that I can hire tell.
Now by your leve I may, no lenger dwell;
Our abbot wol out of this toun anon,
And in his compagnie I muste gon.
Grete wel our dame, min owen nece swete!
And farewel, dere cosin! til we mete.

This marchant, which that was ful ware and wise,
Creanced hath, and paide eke in Paris
To certain Lumbardes, redy in hir hond,
The summe of gold, and gate of hem his bond,
And home he goth mery as a popingay,
For wel he knew he stood in swiche array
That nedes muste he winne in that viage
A thousand frankes above all his costage.

His wif ful redy mette him at the gate,
As she was wont of old usage algate;
And all that night in mirthe they ben sette,
For he was riche, and clerely out of dette.
Whan it was day, this marchant gan embrace
His wif all newe, and kiste hire in hire face,
And up he goth, and maketh it ful tough.
No more, quod she; by God ye have ynough;
And wantonly agen with him she plaide,
Til at the last this marchant to hire saide:

By God, quod he, I am a litel wrothe
With you my wif, although it be me lothe;
And wote ye why? by God, as that I gesse,
That ye han made a manere strangenesse
Betwixen me and my cosin Dan John.
Ye shuld have warned me or I had gon
That he you had an hundred frankes paide
By redy token, and held him evil apaide
For that I to him spake of chevisance:
(Me semed so as by his contenance)
But natheles, by God our heven king
I thoughte not to axe of him no thing.
I pray thee, wif, ne do thou no more so:
Tell me alway, er that I fro thee go,
If any dettour hath in min absence
Ypaid thee, lest thurgh thy negligence
I might him axe a thing that he hath paide.

This wif was not aferde ne affraide,
But boldely she said, and that anon,
Mary! I defie that false monk Dan John;
I kepe not of his tokenes never a del:
He toke me certain gold, I wote it wel.
What! evil thedome on his monkes snoute;
For God it wot I wend withouten doute
That he had yeve it me because of you,
To don therwith min honour and my prow
For cosinage and eke for *belle chere*
That he hath had ful often times here:
But sith I see I stonde in swiche disjoint
I wol answere you shortly to the point.

Ye have mo slakke dettours than am I;
For I wol pay you wel and redily
Fro day to day; and if so be I faille,
I am your wif, score it upon my taile,
And I shal pay as sone as ever I may;
For by my trouth I have on min array,
And not in waste, bestowed it every del;
And for I have bestowed it so wel

For your honour, for Goddes ſake I ſay
As beth not wrothe, but let us laugh and play:
Ye ſhal my joly body han to wedde;
By God I n'ill not pay you but a-beddè:
Foryeve it me, min owen ſponſe dere!
Turne hitherward, and maketh better chere.
This marchant ſaw ther was no remedy,
And for to chide it n'ere but a foly,
Sith that the thing may not amended be.
Now wif, he ſaid, and I foryeve it thee;
But by thy lif be ne no more ſo large;
Kepe bet my good; this yeve I thee in charge.
Thus endeth now my Tale, and God us ſende
Taling ynough unto our lives ende.

THE PRIORESSES PROLOGUE.

Wel ſaid, by corpus Domini, quod our Hoſte;
Now longe mote thou ſaillen by the coſte,
Thou gentil maiſter, gentil marinere.
God give the monke a thouſand laſt quad yere.
A ha! felawes, beth ware of ſwiche a jape.
The monke put in the manues hode an ape,
And in his wifes eke, by Seint Auſtin.
Draweth no monkes more into your in.
But now paſſe over, and let us ſeek aboute
Who ſhall now tellen firſt of all this route
Another Tale: and with that word he ſaid,
As curteiſly as it had been a maid;
My Lady Prioreſſe, by your leve,
So that I wiſt I ſhuld you not agreve,
I wolde demen that ye tellen ſhold
A Tale next, if ſo were that ye wold.
Now wol ye vocheſauf, may Lady dere?
Gladly, quod ſhe; and ſaide as ye ſhul here.

THE PRIORESSES TALE*.

O Lord our Lord! thy name how merveillous
Is in this large world yſprad! (quod ſhe)
For not al only thy laude precious
Parfourmed is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Parfourmed is, for on the breſt ſouking
Sometime ſhewen they thin herying.
Wherfore in laude, as I can beſt and may,
Of thee and of the white lily flour
Which that thee bare, and is a maide alway,
To tell a ſtorie I will do my labour;
Not that I may encreſen hire honour,
For ſhe herſelven is honour and rote
Of bountee, next hire ſone, and ſoules bote.
O mother maide! o maide and mother fre!
O baſhe unbrent! brenning in Moyſes ſight,
That raviſhedeſt doun fro the deitee,
Thurgh thin humbleſſe, the goſt that in the alight
Of whoſe vertue, whan he thin herte light,
Conceived was the fathers ſapience,
Helpe me to tell it in thy reverence.
Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertue and thy gret humilitee,
Ther may no tongue expreſſe in no ſcience;
For ſomtime, Lady! or men pray to thee
Thou goſt beforn of thy benignitee
And geteſt us the light of thy prayere
To giden us unto thy ſone ſo dere.
My conning is ſo weke, o bliſful Quene!
For to declare thy grete worthineſſe,
That I ne may the weighte not ſuſtene;
But as a child of twelf moneth old or leſſe,
That can unnethes any word expreſſe,
Right ſo fare I, and therefore I you pray
Gideth my ſong that I ſhal of you ſay.
Ther was in Aſie, in a gret citee,
Amonges Criſten folk a Jewerie,
Suſtened by a lord of that contree,
For foule uſure and lucre of vilanie
Hateful to Criſt and to his compagnie,
And thurgh the ſtrete men mighten ride and wende,
For it was free, and open at eyther ende.
A litel ſcole of Criſten folk ther ſtood
Doun at the ferther end, in which ther were
Children an hepe comen of Criſten blood,
That lerned in that ſcole yere by yere
Swiche manere doctrine as men uſed there;

* A miracle of a Chriſtian child murdered by the Jews. Pury.

This is to ſay, to ſingen and to rede,
As ſmale children don in hir childhede.
Among thiſe children was a widewes ſone,
A litel clergion, ſevene yere of age,
That day by day to ſcole was his wone,
And eke alſo, wheras he ſey the image
Of Criſtes moder, had he in uſage,
As him was taught, to knele adoun, and ſay
Ave Marie as he goth by the way.
Thus hath this widewe hire litel ſone ytaught
Our blisful Lady, Criſtes mother dere,
To worſhip ay, and he forgate it naught,
For ſely childe wol away ſone lere.
But aye whan I remembre on this matere
Seint Nicholas ſtant ever in my preſence,
For he ſo yong to Criſt did reverence.
This litel childe his litel book lerning,
As he ſat in the ſcole at his primere,
He *Alma Redemptoris* herde ſing,
As children lered hir antiphonere,
And as he dorſt he drow him nere and nere,
And herkened ay the words and the note,
Til he the firſte vers coude al by rote.
Nought wiſt he what this Latin was to ſay,
For he ſo yonge and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felaw gan he pray
To expounden him this ſong in his language,
Or telle him why this ſong was in uſage:
This prayde he him to conſtrue and declare
Ful oft time upon his knees bare.
His felaw, which that elder was than he,
Anſwered him thus; This ſong I have herd ſay,
Was maked of our blisful Lady fre,
Hire to ſalue, and eke hire for to prey
To ben our help and ſocour whan we dey.
I can no more expound in this matere:
I lerne ſong; I can but ſmal grammere.
And is this ſong maked in reverence
Of Criſtes moder? ſaid this innocent:
Now certes I wol don my diligence
To conne it all or Criſtemaſſe be went,
Though that I for my primer ſhal be ſhent,
And ſhal be beten thries in an houre.
I wol it conne our Ladie for to honoure.
His felaw taught him homeward prively
Fro day to day til he coude it by rote,
And than he ſong it wel and boldely
Fro word to word according with the note:
Twies a day it paſſed thurgh his throte,
To ſcoleward and homeward whan he wente;
On Criſtes moder ſet was his entente.
As I have ſaid, thurghout the Jewerie
This litel child, as he came to and fro,
Ful merily than wold he ſing and crie
O Alma Redemptoris! ever mo.
The ſweteneſſe hath his herte perſed ſo
Of Criſtes moder, that to hire to pray
He cannot ſtint of ſinging by the way.
Our firſte fo, the ſerpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jewes herte his waſpes neſt,
Up ſwale and ſaid, O Ebraike peple, alas!
Is this to you a thing that is honeſt.
That ſwiche a boy ſhal walken as him leſte
In your deſpit, and ſing of ſwiche ſentence,
Which is again our lawes reverence?
From thennesforth the Jewes han conſpired
This innocent out of this world to chace:
And homicide thereto han they hired,
That in an aleye had a privee place,
And as the child gan forthby for to pace
This curſed Jew him hent and held him faſt,
And cut his throte, and in a pit him caſt.
I ſay that in a wardrope they him threwe
Wher as thiſe Jewes purgen hir entraille.
O curſed folk! of Herodes alle-newe,
What may your evil entente you availle?
Mordre wol out, certein it wol not faille;
And namely ther the honour of God ſhal ſprede
The blood out crieth on your curſed dede.
O martyr ſouded in virginitee!
Now maiſt thou ſinge and folwen ever in on
The white Lamb celeſtial. quod ſhe,
Of which the gret evangeliſt Seint John
In Pathmos wrote, which ſayth that they that goo
Beforn this Lamb, and ſing a ſong al newe,
That never fleſhly woman they ne knewe.
This poure widewe awaiteth al that night
After hire litel childe, and he came nought,
For which as ſone as it was dayes light,
With face pale of drede and beſy thought
She hath at ſcole and elles wher him ſought,
Til finally ſhe gan ſo fer aſpie
That he laſt ſeen was in the Jewerie.
With modres pitee in hire breſt encloſed
She goth, as ſhe were half out of hire minde,
To every place wher ſhe hath ſuppoſed
By likelihed hire litel child to finde;
And ever on Criſtes moder meke and kinde
She cried, and at the laſte thus ſhe wrought,
Among the curſed Jewes ſhe him ſought.
She freyneth and ſhe praieth pitouſly
To every Jew that dwelled in thilke place
To telle hire of hire child went ought forth by;
They ſayden Nay; but Jeſu of his grace
Yave in hire thought, within a little ſpace,
That in that place after hire ſone ſhe cride
Ther he was caſten in a pit beſide.
O grete God, that parformeſt thy laude
By mouth of innocentes, lo here thy might
This gem of chaſtitee, this emeraude,
And eke of martirdome the rubie bright,
Ther he with throte ycorven lay upright
He *Alma Redemptoris* gan to ſinge
So loude, that all the place gan to ringe.
The Criſten folk that thurgh the ſtrete wente
In comen for to wondre upon this thing,
And haſtifly they for the provoſt ſente:
He came anon withouten tarying,
And herieth Criſt, that is of heven king,
And eke his moder, honour of mankind,
And after that the Jewes let he binde
This child with pitous lamentation
Was taken up, ſinging his ſong alway,
And with honour and gret proceſſion
They carien him unto the next abbey;
His moder ſwouning by the bere lay:
Unnethes might the peple that was there
This newe Rachel bringen fro his bere.
With turment and with ſhameful deth eche on
This provoſt doth thiſe Jewes for to ſterve

That of this moder wiſte, and that anon:
He n'olde no ſwiche curſednesſe obſerve:
Evil ſhal he have that evil wol deſerve;
Therfor with wild hors he did hem drawe,
And after that he heng hem by the lawe.
Upon his bere ay lith this innocent
Beforn the auter while the maſſe laſt,
And after that the abbot with his covent
Han ſpedde hem for to berie him ful faſt:
And whan they holy water on him caſt
Yet ſpake this child, whan ſpreint was the holy water,
And ſang, *O Alma Redemptoris Mater!*
This abbot, which that was an holy man,
As monkies ben, or elles ought to be,
This yonge child to conjure he began,
And ſaid; O dere child! I haſſe thee,
In vertue of the holy trinitee,
Tell me what is thy cauſe for to ſing,
Sith that thy throte is cut to my ſeming.
My throte is cut unto my nekke bon,
Saide this child, and as by way of kinde
I ſhuld have deyd, ye longe time agon,
But Jeſu Criſt, as ye in bookes finde,
Wol that this glory laſt and be in minde,
And for the worſhip of his moder dere.
Yet may I ſing *O Alma* loude and clere.
This welle of mercie, Criſtes moder ſwete,
I loved alway, as after my conning;
And whan that I my lif ſhulde forlete
To me ſhe came, and bad me for to ſing
This antem verailly in my dying,
As ye han herde; and whan that I had ſonge
Me thought ſhe laid a grain upon my tonge.
Wherfore I ſing, and ſing I mote certain,
In honour of that blisful maiden free,
Til fro my tonge of taken is the grain.
And after that thus ſaide ſhe to me;
My litel child, than wol I fetchen thee,
Whan that the grain is fro thy tongue ytake:
Be not agaſte, I wol thee not forſake.
This holy monk, this abbot him mene I,
His tonge out caught, and toke away the grain,
And he yave up the goſt ful ſoftely.
And whan this abbot had this wonder ſein
His ſalte teres trilled adoun as reyne,
And groff he fell al platte upon the ground,
And ſtill he lay as he had ben ybound.
The covent lay eke upon the pavement
Weping and herying Criſtes moder dere;
And after that they riſen, and forth ben went,
And toke away this martir fro his bere,
And in a tombe of marble ſtones clere
Encloſen they his litel body ſwete:
Ther he is now God lene us for to mete.
O young Hew of Lincoln! ſlain alſo
With curſed Jewes, as it is notable,
For it n'is but a litel while ago,
Pray eke for us, we ſinful folk unſtable,
That of his mercie God ſo merciable
On us his grete mercie multiplie,
For reverence of his moder Marie.

PROLOGUE TO SIRE THOPAS.

Whan ſaid was this miracle every man
As ſober was that wonder was to ſee,
Til that our Hoſte to japen he began,
And than at erſt he loked upon me,
And ſaide thus; What man art thou? quod he:
Thou lokeſt as thou woldeſt find an hare,
For ever upon the ground I ſee thee ſtare.
Approche nere, and loke up merily.
Now ware you, Sires, and let this man have place;
He in the waſte is ſhapen as wel as I.
This were a popet in an arme to embrace
For any woman, ſmal and faire of face.
He ſemeth elviſh by his contenance,
For unto no wight doth he deliance.
Say now ſomwhat, ſin other folk han ſaide;
Tell us a Tale of mirthe, and that anon.
Hoſte, quod I, ne be not evil apaide,
For other Tale certes can I non
But of a rime I lerned yore agon.
Ye, that is good, quod he; we ſhullen here
Som deintee thing me thinketh by thy chere.

THE RIME OF SIRE THOPAS*.

Listeneth, Lordinges, in good entent,
And I wol tel you *verament*
Of mirthe and of ſolas,
Al of a knight was faire and gent
In bataille and in turnament,
His name was Sire Thopas.
Yborne he was in fer contree,
In Flandres, al beyonde the ſee,
At Popering in the place:
His father was a man ful free,
And lord he was of that contree,
As it was Goddes grace.
Sire Thopas was a doughty ſwain,
White was his face as paindemaine,
His lippes red as roſe:
His rudde is like ſcarlet in grain,
And I you tell in good certain
He had a ſemely noſe.
His here, his berde, was like ſafroun,
That to his girdle raught adoun;
His ſhoon of Cordewane;
Of Brugges were his hoſen broun;
His robe was of chekelatoun,
That coſte many a Jane.
He coude hunt at the wilde dere,
And ride on hauking for the rivere
With grey goſhauk on honde;
Therto he was a good archere:
Of wraſtling was ther non his pere
Ther ony ram ſhuld ſtonde.
Ful many a maide bright in bour
They mourned for him *par amour*
Whan hem were bet to ſlepe;
But he was chaſte and no lechour,
And ſwete as is the bramble flour
That bereth the red hepe.
And ſo it fell upon a day,
Forſoth, as I you tellen may,
Sire Thopas wold out ride;
He worth upon his ſtede gray,
And in his hond a launcegay,
A long ſwerd by his ſide.
He priketh thurgh a faire foreſt,
Therin is many a wilde beſt,
Ye both buck and hare;
And as he pricked north and eſt,
I telle it you, him had almeſte
Betidde a ſory care.

* A northern Tale of an outlandiſh knight, purpoſely uttered by Chaucer in a rime and ſtyle differing from the reſt, as though he himſelf were not the author but only the reporter of the other Tales. *Urry.*

Ther ſpringen herbes grete and ſmale,
The licoris and the ſetewale,
And many a cloue gilofre,
And notemuge to put in ale,
Whether it be moiſt or ſtale,
Or for to lain in cofre.
The briddes ſingen, it is no nay,
The ſperhauk and the popingay,
That joye it was to here,
The throſtel cok made eke his lay,
The wode dove upon the ſpray
He ſang ful loude and clere.
Sire Thopas fell in love-longing
Al whan he herd the throſtel ſing,
And priked as he were wood;
His faire ſtede in his priking
So ſwatte that men might him wring,
His ſides were al blood.
Sire Thopas eke ſo wery was
For priking on the ſofte gras,
So fiers was his corage,
That doun he laid him in that place
To maken his ſtede ſom ſolace,
And yaf him good forage.
A, Seinte Mary, *benedicite!*
What aileth this Love at me
To binde me ſo ſore?
Me dremed all this night parde
An elf quene ſhal my lemman be,
And ſlepe under my gore.
An elf quene wol I love ywis,
For in this world no woman is
Worthy to be my make in toun——
All other women I forſake,
And to an elf quene I me take
By dale and eke by doun.
Into his ſadel he clombe anon,
And priked over ſtile and ſton
An elf quene for to eſpie,
Til he ſo long had riden and gone
That he fond in a privee wone
The contree of Faerie.
Wherin he ſoughte north and ſouth,
And oft he ſpied with his mouth
In many a foreſt wilde,
For in that contree n'as ther non
That to him dorſt ride or gon,
Neither wif ne childe.
Til that ther came a gret geaunt,
His name was Sire Oliphaunt,
A perilous men of dede;
He ſayde, Child, by Termagaunt
But if thou prike out of myn haunt
Anon I ſlee thy ſteed with mace——
Here is the Quene of Faerie,
With harpe, and pipe, and ſimphonie,
Dwelling in this place.
The child ſayd, Al ſo mote I the
To morwe wol I meten thee,
When I have min armoure,
And yet I hope *par ma foy*
That thou ſhalt with this launcegay
Abiden it ful ſoure: thy mawe
Shal I pers, if I may,
Or it be fully prime of the day,
For here thou ſhalt be ſlawe.

Sire Thopas drew abak ful faſt;
This geaunt at him ſtones caſt
Out of a fel ſtaffe ſling:
But faire eſcaped child Thopas,
And all it was thurgh Goddes grace,
And thurgh his faire bering.
Yet liſteneth, Lordings, to my Tale,
Merier than the nightingale,
For now I wol you roune
How Sire Thopas with ſides ſmale,
Priking over hill and dale,
Is comen agein to toune.
His mery men commandeth he
To maken him bothe game and gle,
For nedes muſt he fighte
With a geaunt with hedes three
For paramour and jolitee
Of on that ſhone ful brighte.
Do come, he ſayd, my mineſtrales
And geſtours for to tellen tales
Anon in min arming,
Of romaunces that ben reales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
And eke of love-longing.
They ſet him firſt the ſwete win,
And mede eke in a maſelin
And real ſpiceric,
Of ginger-bred that was ful fin,
And licoris and eke comin,
With ſugar that is trie.
He didde next his white lere
Of cloth of lake fin and clere
A breche and eke a ſherte,
And next his ſhert an haketon,
And over that an habergeon
For percing of his herte;
And over that a fin hauberk
Was all ywrought of Jewes werk,
Ful ſtrong it was of plate,
And over that his cote-armoure,
As white as is the lily floure,
In which he wold debate.
His ſheld was all of gold ſo red,
And therin was a bores hed,
A charboucle beſide;
And ther he ſwore on ale and bred
How that the geaunt ſhuld be ded,
Betide what ſo betide.
His jambuix were of cuirbouly,
His ſwerdes ſheth of ivory,
His helme of latoun bright,
His ſadel was of rewel bone,
His bridel as the ſonne ſhone,
Or as the mone light.
His ſpere was of fin cypres,
That bodeth werre and nothing pes,
The hed ful ſharpe yground:
His ſtede was all dapple gray,
It goth an aumble in the way
Ful ſoftely and round in londe——
Lo, Lordes min, here is a fit,
If ye wol ony more of it
To telle it wol I fond.
Now hold your mouth *pour charite*
Bothe knight and lady fre,

And herkeneth to my ſpell;
Of bataille and of chevalrie,
Of ladies love and druerie,
Anon I wol you tell.
  Men ſpeken of romaunces of pris,
Of Hornchild and of Ipotis,
Of Bevis and Sire Guy,
Of Sire Libeux and Pleindamour,
But Sire Thopas he bereth the flour
Of real chevalrie.
  His goode ſtede he al beſtrode,
And forth upon his way he glode
As ſparcle out of bronde;
Upon his creſt he bare a tour,
And therin ſtiked a lily flour;
God ſhilde his corps fro ſhonde!
  And for he was a knight auntrous
He n'olde ſlepen in non hous,
But liggen in his hood;
His bright helm was his wanger,
And by him baited his deſtrer
Of herbes fin and good.
  Himſelf drank water of the well,
As did the knight Sire Percivel
So worthy under wede,
Til on a day——

PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS.

No more of this for Goddes dignitee,
Quod our Hoſte, for thou makeſt me
So wery of thy veray lewedneſſe,
That al ſo wiſly God my ſoule bleſſe
Min eres aken of thy drafty ſpeche.
Now ſwiche a rime the devil I beteche;
This may wel be rime dogerel, quod he.
Why ſo? quod I; why wolt thou letten me
More of my Tale than an other man,
Sin that it is the beſte rime I can?
By God, quod he, for plainly at o word
Thy drafty riming is not worth a tord:
Thou doſt nought elles but diſpendeſt time.
Sire, at o word thou ſhalt no lenger rime.
Let ſee wher thou canſt tellen ought in geſte,
Or tellen in proſe ſomwhat at the leſte
In which ther be ſom mirthe or ſom doctrine.
Gladly, quod I; by Goddes ſwete pine
I wol you tell a litel thing in proſe
That oughte liken you, as I ſuppoſe,
Or elles certes ye be to dangerous.
It is a moral Tale vertuous,
Al be it told ſometime in ſondry wiſe
Of ſondry folk, as I ſhal you deviſe.
As thus; ye wot that every evangeliſt
That telleth us the peine of Jeſu Criſt
Ne ſaith not alle thing as his felaw doth;
But natheles hir ſentence is al ſoth,
And alle accorden as in hir ſentence,
Al be ther in hir telling difference;
For ſom of hem ſay more and ſom ſay leſſe
Whan they his pitous paſſion expreſſe.
I mene of Mark and Mathew, Luke and John,
But douteles hir ſentence is all on.
Therfore, Lordinges all, I you beſeche,
If that ye thinke I vary in my ſpeche,
As thus, though that I telle ſom del more
Of proverbes than ye han herde before
Comprehended in this litel tretiſe here,
To enforcen with the effect of my matere,
And though I not the ſame wordes ſay
As ye han herde, yet to you alle I pray
Blameth me not, for as in my ſentence
Shul ye nowher finden no difference
Fro the ſentence of thilke tretiſe lite
After the which this mery Tale I write;
And therfore herkeneth what I ſhal ſay,
And let me tellen all my Tale I pray.

TALE OF MELIBEUS*.

A YONGE man called Melibeus, mighty and riche, begate upon his wif that called was Prudence a doughter which that called was Sophie.

Upon a day befell that he for his disport is went into the feldes him to playe. His wif and eke his doughter hath he left within his hous, of which the dores weren fast yshette. Foure of his olde foos han it espied, and setten ladders to the walles of his hous, and by the windowes ben entred, and beten his wif, and wounded his doughter with five mortal woundes in five sondry places; this is to say, in hire feet, in hire hondes, in hire eres, in hire nose, and in hire mouth, and lesten hire for dede, and wenten away.

Whan Melibeus retorned was into his hous, and sey al this meschief, he like a madman rending his clothes gan to wepe and crie.

Prudence his wif, as fer forth as she dorste, besought him of his weping for to stint: but not forthy he gan to crie and wepen ever lenger the more.

This noble wif Prudence remembred hire upon the sentence of Ovide, in his book that cleped is The Remedie of Love, wheras he saith, He is a fool that disstourbeth the moder to wepe in the deth of hire childe til she have wept hire fille, as for a certain time; and than shal a man don his diligence with amiable wordes hire to reconforte, and preye hire of hire weping for to stinte. For which reson this noble wif Prudence suffred hire husbond for to wepe and crie as for a certain space, and whan she saw hire time she sayde to him in this wise: Alas! my Lord, quod she, why make ye yourself for to be like a fool? forsothe it appertaineth not to a wise man to maken swiche a sorwe. Youre doughter with the grace of God shal warish and escape. And al were it so that she right now were dede, ye ne ought not as for hire deth youreself to destroye. Senek saith, The wise man shal not take to gret discomfort for the deth of his children, but certes he shulde suffren it in patience, as wel as he abideth the deth of his owen propre persone.

This Melibeus answered anon and saide; What man (quod he) shulde of his weping stinte that hath so gret a cause for to wepe? Jesu Crist our Lord himself wepte for the deth of Lazarus his frend. Prudence answerd; Certes wel I wote attempre weping is nothing defended to him that sorweful is among folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted him to wepe. The apostle Poule unto the Romaines writeth, Man shal rejoyce with hem that maken joye, and wepen with swiche folk as wepen. But though attempre weping be graunted, outrageous weping certes is defended. Measure of weping shulde be considered after the lore that techeth us Senek. Whan that thy frend is dede (quod he) let not thin eyen to moiste hem of teres ne to muche drie; although the teres comen to thin eyen let hem not falle. And whan thou hast forgon thy frend do diligence to get agein another frend; and this is more wisdom than for to wepe for thy frende which that thou hast lorne, for therin is no bote. And therfore if ye governe you by sapience, put away forwe out of youre herte. Remembreth you that Jesus Sirak sayth, A man that is joyous and glad in herte it him conserveth florishing in his age; but sothly a sorweful herte maketh his bones drie. He saith eke thus, that surwe in herte sleeth ful many a man. Salomon sayth, that right as mouthes in the shepes fleese anoien to the clothes, and the smale wormes to the tree, right so anoieth sorwe to the herte of man; wherfore us ought as wel in the deth of oure children as in the losse of our goodes temporel have patience.

Remembre you upon the patient Job; whan he hadde lost his children and his temporel substaunce, and in his body endured and received ful many a grevous tribulation, yet sayde he thus, Oure Lord hath yave it to me, our Lord hath beraft it me; right as oure Lord hath wold right so it is don; yblessed be the name of oure Lord. To thise foresaide thinges answered Melibeus unto his wif Prudence: All thy wordes (quod he) ben trewe, and therto profitable, but trewely mine herte is troubled with this sorwe so grevously that I n'ot what to don. Let calle (quod Prudence) thy trewe frendes alle, and thy linage, which that ben wise, and telleth to hem your cas, and herkeneth what they saye in conseilling, and go-

* Prudence, the discreet wife of Melibeus, persuadeth her husband to patience, and to receive his enemies to mercie and grace. A Tale full of moralitie, wherin both high and low may learne to governe their affections. *Speght.*

verne you after hir ſentence. Salomon ſaith, Werke all thinges by conſeil and thou ſhalt never repente.

Than by conſeil of his wif Prudence this Melibeus let callen a gret congregation of folk, as ſurgiens, phiſiciens, olde folk and yonge, and ſom of his olde enemies reconciled (as by hir ſemblant) to his love and to his grace; and therwithal ther comen ſome of his neighebours that diden him reverence more for drede than for love, as it happeth oft: ther comen alſo ful many ſubtil flatterers, and wiſe advocats lerned in the lawe.

And whan thiſe folk togeder aſſembled weren, this Melibeus in ſorweful wiſe ſhewed hem his caas, and by the manere of his ſpeche it ſemed that in herte he bare a cruel ire, ready to don vengeaunce upon his foos, and ſodeinly deſired that the werre ſhulde beginne, but natheles yet axed he his conſeil upon this matere. A ſurgien, by licence and aſſent of ſwiche as weren wiſe, up roſe, and unto Melibeus ſayde as ye moun here.

Sire, (quod he) as to us ſurgiens apperteineth that we do to every wight the beſte that we can, wher as we ben withholden, and to our patient that we do no damage, wherfore it happeth many time and ofte that whan twey men han everich wounded other o ſame ſurgien heleth hem both, wherfore unto our art it is not pertinent to norice werre, ne parties to ſupporte: but certes as to the wariſhing of youre doughter, al be it ſo that perilouſly ſhe be wounded, we ſhuln do ſo entent if beſmeſſe fro day to night, that with the grace of God ſhe ſhal be hole and ſound as ſone as is poſſible. Almoſt right in the ſame wiſe the phiſiciens anſwerden, ſave that they ſaiden a fewe wordes more; that right as maladies ben cured by hir contraries, right ſo ſhal man wariſhe werre. His neighebours ful of envie, his feined frendes that ſemed reconciled, and his flaterers, maden ſemblant of weping, and empeired and agregged muchel of this matere, in preyſing gretly Melibee of might, of power, of richeſſe, and of frendes, deſpiſing the power of his adverſaries, and ſaiden outrely that he anon ſhulde wreken him on his foos, and beginnen werre.

Up roſe than an advocat that was wiſe, by leve and by conſeil of other that were wiſe, and ſayde; Lordinges, the nede for the which we ben aſſembled in this place is a ful havie thing, and heigh matere, becauſe of the wrong and of the wikkedneſſe that hath be don, and eke by reaſon of the grete damages that in time coming ben poſſible to fallen for the ſame cauſe, and eke by reſon of the gret richeſſe and power of the parties bothe, for the which reſons it were a ful gret peril to erren in this matere; wherfore, Melibeus, this is oure ſentence: we conſeille you, aboven alle thing, that right anon thou do thy diligence in keping of thy propre perſone in ſwiche a wiſe that thou ne want non eſpiene watche thy body for to ſave: and after that we conſeille that in thin hous thou ſette ſuffiſant garniſon, ſo that they moun as wel thy body as thy hous defende; but certes for to meeven werre, ne ſodenly for to do vengeaunce, we moun not deme in ſo litel time that it were profitable; wherefore we axen leiſer and ſpace to have deliberation in this as to deme; for the comune proverbe ſaith thus He that ſone demeth ſone ſhal repente; and eke men ſain that thilke juge is wiſe that ſone underſtondeth a matere and jugeth by leiſer: for al be it ſo that al tarying be anoiful, algates it is not to repreve in yeving of jugement, ne in vengeance taking, whan it is ſuffiſant and reſonable: and that ſhewed our Lord Jeſu Criſt by enſample; for whan that the woman that was taken in advoutrie was brought in his preſence, to knowen what ſhuld be don with hire perſone, al be it that he wiſt wel himſelf what that he wolde anſwere, yet ne wolde he not anſwere ſo deinly, but he wolde have deliberation, and in the ground he wrote twies: and by thiſe cauſes we axen deliberation, and we ſhuln than by the grace of God conſeille the thing that ſhal be profitable.

Up ſterte than the yonge folk at ones, and the moſt partie of that compagnie han ſcorned this olde wiſe man, and begonnen to make noiſe and ſaiden, Right ſo as while that iren is hot men ſhulde ſmite, right ſo men ſhuln do wreken hir wronges while that they ben freſhe and newe: and with loude voys they criden Werre! werre! Up roſe tho on of thiſe old wiſe, and with his hand made countenance that men ſhuld holde hem ſtille and yeve him audience. Lordinges, (quod he) ther is ful many a man thet crieth Werre! werre! that wote ful litel what werre amounteth. Werre at his beginning hath ſo gret an entring and ſo large, that every wight may enter whan him liketh, and lightly find werre; but certes what end that ſhal befalle it is not light to know; for ſothly whan that werre is ones begonne there is ful many a child unborne of his moder that ſhal ſterve yong by cauſe of thilke werre, other elles live in ſorwe, and dien in wretchedneſſe; and therfore or that any werre be begonne men muſt have gret conſeil and gret deliberation. And whan this olde man wende to enforcen his tale by reſons, wel nie aile at ones begonne they to riſe for to breken his tale, and bidden him ful oft his wordes for to abregge; for ſothly he that precheth to hem that liſten not heren his wordes, his ſermon hem anoieth; for Jeſus Sirak ſayth that muſike in weping is a noious thing: this is to ſayn, as muche availleth to ſpeke beforn folk to which his ſpeche anoieth as toſinge beforne him that wepeth. And whan this wiſe man ſaw that him wanted audience al ſhameſaſt he ſette him doun agein: for Salomon ſaith, Ther as thou ne mayſt have non audience enforce thee not to ſpeke. I ſee wel (quod this wiſe man) that the comune proverbe is ſoth, that good conſeil wanteth whan it is moſt nede.

Yet had this Melibeus in his conſeil many folk that prively in his ere conſeilled him certain thing, and conſeilled him the contrary in general audience. Whan Melibeus had herd that the greteſt party of his conſeil were accorded that he ſhulde make werre, anon he conſented to hire conſeilling,

and fully affermed hir ſentence. Than Dame Prudence, whan that ſhe ſaw how that hire huſbonde ſhope him for to awreke him on his foos, and to beginne werre, ſhe in ful humble wiſe, whan ſhe ſaw hire time, ſayde him theſe wordes: My Lord, (quod ſhe) I you beſeche, as hertly as I dare and can, nie haſte you not to haſte, and for alle guerdonds as yeve me audience; for Piers Alphonſe * ſayth, Who ſo that doth to thee outher good or harme haſte thee not to quite it, for in this wiſe thy frend wol abide, and thin enemie ſhal the lenger live in drede. The proverbe ſayth, He haſteth wel that wiſely can abide; and in wikked haſt is no profite.

This Melibee anſwered unto his wif Prudence; I purpoſe not (quod he) to werken by thy conſeil for many cauſes and reſons, for certes every wight wold hold me than a fool; this is to ſayn, if I for thy conſeilling wolde change thinges that bed ordained and affirmed by ſo many wiſe men. Secondly, I ſay that all women ben wicke, and non good of hem all; for of a thouſand men, ſaith Salomon, I found o good man; but certes of alle women good found I never. And alſo, certes if I governed me by thy conſeil it ſhulde ſeme that I had yeve thee over me the maiſtrie; and God forbede that it ſo were; for Jeſus Sirak ſayth, that if the wif have the maiſtrie ſhe is contrarious to hire huſbond; and Salomon ſayth, Never in thy lif to thy wif, ne to thy child, ne to thy frend, ne yeve no power over thyſelf; for better it were that thy children axe of thee thinges that hem nedeth, than thou ſee thyſelf in the handes of thy children. And alſo if I wol werche by thy conſeilling, certes it muſt be ſomtime ſecree, til it were time that it be knowen, and this ne may not be if I ſhulde be conſeilled by thee [For it is writen † The janglerie of women ne can no thing hide ſave that which they wote not; after the philoſophre ſeyth, In wikked conſeil women venquiſhen men: and for thiſe reſons I ne owe not to be conſeilled by thee.]

Whan Dame Prudence, ful debonairly, and with gret pacience, had herd all that hire huſbonde liked for to ſay, than axed ſhe of him licence for to ſpeke, and ſayde in this wiſe: My lord, (quod ſhe) as to your firſt reſon it may lightly ben anſwerd, for I ſay that it is no folie to chaunge conſeil whan the thing is chaunged, or elles whan the thing ſemeth otherwiſe than it ſemed afore. And moreover, I ſay, though that ye have ſworne and behight to performe your empriſe, and nevertheleſs ye weive to performe thilke ſame empriſe by juſt cauſe, men ſhuld not ſay therfore ye were a lyer ne forſworn; for the book ſayth that the wiſe man maketh no leſing whan he turneth his corage for the better. And al be it that your empriſe be eſtabliſhed and ordeined by gret multitude of folk, yet thar you not accompliſh thilke ordinance but you liketh, for the trouthe of thinges and the profit ben rather founden in fewe folk that ben wiſe and ful of reſon, than by gret multitude of folk ther every man cryeth and clattereth what him liketh; ſothly ſwiche multitude is not honeſt. As to the ſecond reſon, wheras ye ſay that all women ben wicke; ſave your grace, certes ye deſpiſe alle women in this wiſe, and he that all deſpiſeth, as ſaith the book, all deſpleſeth. And Senek ſaith, that who ſo wol have ſapience ſhall no man diſpreiſe, but he ſhal gladly teche the ſcience that he can without preſumption or pride, and ſwiche thinges as he nought can he ſhal not ben aſhamed to lere hem, and to enquere of leſſe folk than himſelf. And, Sire, that ther hath ben ful many a good woman may lightly be proved; for certes, Sire, our Lord Jeſu Criſt n'olde never han deſcended to be borne of a woman if all women had be wicked; and after that, for the gret bountee that is in women, our Lord Jeſu Criſt, whan he was riſen from deth to lif, appeared rather to a woman than to his apoſtles. And though that Salomon ſayde he founde never no good woman, it folweth not therfore that all women be wicked; for though that he ne found no good woman, certes many another man hath founde many a woman ful good and trewe: or elles, peraventure, the entent of Salomon was this, that in ſoverayne bountee he found no woman; this is to ſay, that ther is no wight that hath ſoveraine bountee ſave God alone, as he himſelf recordeth in his Evangelies; for ther is no creature ſo good that him ne wanteth ſomwhat of the perfection of God that is his maker. Youre thridde reſon is this; ye ſay that if that ye governe you by my conſeil it ſhulde ſeme that ye had yeve me the maiſtrie and the lordſhip of your perſon. Sire, ſave your grace, it is not ſo; for if ſo were that no man ſhulde be conſeilled but only of hem that han lordſhip and maiſtrie of his perſon, men n'olde not be conſeilled ſo often; for ſothly thilke man that aſketh conſeil of a purpos, yet hath he free chois whether he wol werke after that conſeil or non. And as to your fourth reſon, ther as ye ſain that the janglerie of women can hide thinges that they wot not, as who ſo ſayth that a woman can not hide that ſhe wote; Sire, thiſe wordes ben underſtonde of women that ben janglereſſes and wicked, of which women men ſain that three thinges driven a man out of his hous, that is to ſay, ſmoke, dropping of raine, and wicked wives; and of ſwiche women Salomon ſayth, that a man were better dwell in deſert than with a woman that is riotous: and, Sire, by your leve, that am not I, for ye have ful often aſſaied my gret ſilence and my gret patience, and eke how wel that I can hide and hele

* He calls himſelf *Petrus Alfonſi* in his *Dialogus contra Judæos*, ms. *Harl.* 3861. He there informs us, that he was himſelf originally a Jew, but converted and baptized in the year 1106, in July, *die natalis App. Petri et Pauli*, upon which account he took the name of *Peter*.

† What is included between hooks is wanting in all the mſſ. which I have examined; it is plainly neceſſary to the ſenſe, as it ſhews us what the fourth and fifth reaſons of Melibeus were to which Prudence replies: I have therefore inſerted as literal a tranſlation as I imagine Chaucer might have made of the following paſſage in the Fr. Melibee, ms. *Reg.* 19 *C.* vii: "Car il eſt eſcript, a gengleri. "des femmes ne puet riens celler fors ce qu'elle ne ſcet: "Apris le philoſophre dit, en mauvais conſeil les femmes "vainquent les hommes, et par ces raiſons je ne dois point "uſer de ton conſeil." *Tyrwhitt.*

thinges that men oughten ſecretly to hiden. And ſothly as to your fifthe reſon, wheras ye ſay that in wicked conſeil women venquiſhed men, God wote that thilke reſon ſtant here in no ſtede; for underſtondeth now ye axen conſeil for to do wickednesſe, and if ye wol werken wickednesſe, and your wif reſtraineth thilke wicked purpos, and overcometh you by reſon and by good conſeil, certes your wif ought rather to be preiſed than to be blamed: thus ſhulde ye underſtonde the philoſophre that ſayth, in wicked conſeil women venquiſhen hir huſbondes. And ther as you blamen all women and hir reſons, I ſhal ſhewe you by many enſamples that many women have ben ful good, and yet ben, and hir conſeil holeſome and profitable. Eke ſom men han ſayd that the conſeil of women is either to dere or elles to litel of pris: but al be it ſo that ful many a woman be bad, and hire conſeil vile and nought worth, yet han men founden ful many a good woman, and diſcrete and wiſe in conſeilling. Lo Jacob, thurgh the good conſeil of his mother Rebecke, wan the benſon of his father and the lordſhip over all his brethren; Judith by hire good conſeil delivered the citee of Bethulie, in which ſhe dwelt, out of the honde of Holofern, that had it beſeged, and wolde it al deſtroye; Abigail delivered Nabal hire houſbond fro David the king, that wolde han ſlain him, and appeſed the ire of the king by hire wit and by hire good conſeilling; Heſter by hire conſeil enhaunced gretly the peple of God in the regne of Aſſuerus the king; and the ſame bountee in good conſeilling of many a good woman moun men rede and tell. And further more, whan that oure Lord had created Adam oure forme father he ſayde in this wiſe; It is not good to be a man allone; make we to him an helpe ſemblable to himſelf. Here moun ye ſee that if that women weren not good, and hir conſeil good and profitable, oure Lord God of heven wolde neither han wrought hem ne called hem helpe of man, but rather confuſion of man. And ther ſayd a clerk ones in two vers, What is better than gold? jaſpre; what is better than jaſpre? wiſdom; and what is better than wiſdom? woman; and what is better than a good woman? nothing. And, Sire, by many other reſons moun ye ſeen that many women ben good, and hir conſeil good and profitable: and therefore, Sire, if ye wol troſte to my conſeil, I ſhall reſtore you your doughter hole and ſound, and I wol don to you ſo muche that ye ſhuln have honour in this cas.

Whan Melibee had herd the wordes of his wif Prudence, he ſayd thus; I ſe wel that the word of Salomon is ſoth, for he ſaith that wordes that ben ſpoken diſcretly by ordinaunce ben honiecombes, for they yeven ſweteneſſe to the ſoule and holſomneſſe to the body: and, wif, becauſe of thy ſwete wordes, and eke for I have preved and aſſaied thy grete ſapience and thy grete trouthe, I wol governe me by thy conſeil in alle thing.

Now, Sire, (quod Dame Prudence) and ſith that ye vouchſafe to be governed by my conſeil, I wol enforme you how that ye ſhuln governe yourſelf in cheſing of youre conſeillours. Ye ſhuln firſt in alle your werkes mekely beſechen the heigh God that he wol be your conſeillour, and ſhapeth you to ſwiche entente that he yeve you conſeil and comforte, as taught Tobie his ſone; At alle times thou ſhalt bleſſe God, and preie him to dreſſe thy wayes; and loke that alle thy conſeils ben in him for evermore. Seint James eke ſayth, If any of you have nede of ſapience, axe it of God. And afterwards than ſhullen ye take conſeil in yourſelf, and examine wel your owen thoughtes of ſwiche thinges as you thinketh that ben beſt for your profit; and than ſhuln ye drive fro your herte three thinges that ben contrarious to good conſeil, that is to ſayn, ire, coveitiſe, and haſtineſſe.

Firſt, he that axeth conſeil of himſelf, certes he muſt be withouten ire for many cauſes. The firſt is this; he that hath gret ire and wrath in himſelf, he weneth alway that he may do thing that he may not do. And, ſecondly, he that is irous and wroth he may not wel deme; and he that may not wel deme may not wel conſeille. The thridde is this; he that is irous and wroth, as ſayth Senek, ne may not ſpeke but blameful thinges, and with his vicious wordes he ſtirreth other folk to anger and to ire. And eke, Sire, ye muſt drive coveitiſe out of your herte; for the apoſtle ſayth, that coveitiſe is the rote of all harmes: and troſteth wel that a coveitous man ne can not deme, ne thinke, but only to fulfille the end of his coveitiſe, and certes that ne may never ben accompliſed; for ever the more haboundance that he hath of richeſſe, the more he deſireth. And, Sire, ye muſt alſo drive out of youre herte haſtineſſe; for certes ye ne moun not deme for the beſte a ſoden thought that falleth in your herte, but ye muſt aviſe you on it ful ofte; for, as ye have herde herebefore, the commune proverbe is this, He that ſone demeth ſone repenteth.

Sire, ye ne be not alway in like diſpoſition, for certes ſom thing that ſomtime ſemeth to you that it is good for to do, another time it ſemeth to you the contrarie.

And whan ye han taken conſeil in yourſelf, and han demed by good deliberation ſwiche thing as you ſemeth beſte, than rede I you that ye kepe it ſecree. Bewreye not your conſeil to no perſone, but if ſo be that ye wenen ſikerly that thurgh youre bewreying youre condition ſhal ben to you more profitable; for Jeſus Sirak ſaith, Neither to thy ſoo ne to thy frend diſcover not thy ſecree, ne thy folie; for they woln yeve you audience and loking, and ſupportation, in your preſence, and ſcorne you in youre abſence. Another clerk ſayth, that ſcarſly ſhalt thou finden any perſone that may kepe thy conſeil ſecrely. The book ſaith, While that thou kepeſt thy conſeil in thin herte thou kepeſt it in thy priſon, and whan thou bewreyeſt thy conſeil to any wight, he holdeth thee in his snare: and therfore you is better to hide your conſeil in your herte than to preye him to whom ye han bewreyed youre conſeil that he wol kepe it cloſe and ſtille; for Seneca ſayth, If ſo be that thou ne mayſt not thin owen conſeil hide, how dareſt thou preyen any other wight thy conſeil ſecrely to kepe? But natheles, if thou wene ſiker-

ly that thy bewreying of thy conſeil to a perſone wol make thy condition to ſtonden in the better plight, than ſhalt thou telle him thy conſeil in this wiſe. Firſt, thou ſhalt make no ſemblant whether thee were lever pees or werre, or this or that, ne ſhewe him not thy will ne thin entente; for troſte wel that communly theſe conſeillours ben flaterers, namely the conſeillours of grete lordes, for they enforcen hem alway rather to ſpeken pleſant wordes, enchining to the lordes luſt, than wordes that ben trewe or profitable, and therfore men ſayn that the riche man hath ſelde good conſeil but if he have it of himſelf. And after that thou ſhalt conſider thy frendes and thin enemies. And as touching thy frendes, thou ſhalt conſider which of hem ben moſt feithful and moſt wiſe, and eldeſt and moſt appreved, in conſeilling, and of hem ſhalt thou axe thy conſeil as the cas requireth.

I ſay, that firſt ye ſhuln clepe to youre conſeil youre frendes that ben trewe; for Salomon ſaith, that right as the herte of a man deliteth in ſavour that is ſwote, right ſo the conſeil of trewe frendes yeveth ſweteneſſe to the ſoule: he ſayth alſo, Ther may nothing be likened to the trewe frend, for certes gold ne ſilver ben not ſo much worth as the good will of a trewe frend: and eke he ſayth, that a trewe frend is a ſtrong defence; who ſo that it findeth, certes he findeth a gret treſor. Than ſhuln ye eke conſider if that your trewe frendes ben diſcrete and wiſe; for the book ſaith, Axe alway thy conſeil of hem that ben wiſe. And by this ſame reſon ſhuln ye clepen to youre conſeil youre frendes that ben of age, ſwiche as han ſeyn and ben expert in many thinges, and ben appreved in conſeillinges; for the book ſayth, In olde men is al the ſapience, and in longe time the prudence: And Tullius ſayth, that grete thinges ne ben not ay accomplifed by ſtrengthe ne by deliverneſſe of body, but by good conſeil, by auctoritee of perſones, and by ſcience; the which three thinges ne ben not feble by age, but certes they enforcen and encreſen day by day. And than ſhuln ye kepe this for a general reule; firſt, ye ſhuln clepe to your conſeil a fewe of your frendes that ben eſpecial; for Salomon ſaith, Many frendes have thou, but among a thouſand cheſe thee on to be thy conſeillour. For al be it ſo that thou firſt ne telle thy conſeil but to a fewe, thou mayeſt afterwarde tell it to mo folk if it be nede. But loke alway that thy conſeillours have thilke three conditions that I have ſayd before; that is to ſay, that they be trewe, wiſe, and of olde experience. And werke not alway in every nede by on conſeillour allone, for ſomtime behoveth it to be conſeilled by many; for Salomon ſayth, Salvation of thinges is wher as ther ben many conſeillours.

Now ſith that I have told you of which folk ye ſhulde be conſeilled, now wol I teche you which conſeil ye ought to eſchue. Firſt, ye ſhuln eſchue the conſeilling of fooles; for Salomon ſayth, Take no conſeil of a fool, for he ne cannot conſeille but after his owen luſt and his affection: the book ſayth, The propertee of a fool is this, he troweth lightly harme of every man, and lightly troweth all bountee in himſelf. Thou ſhalt eke eſchue the conſeilling of all flaterers, ſwiche as enforcen hem rather to preiſen youre perſone by flaterie, than for to tell you the ſothfaſtneſſe of thinges.

Wherfore Tullius ſayth, Among alle the peſtilences that ben in frendſhip the greteſt is flaterie; and therfore it is more nede that thou eſchue and drede flaterers than any other peple. The book ſaith, Thou ſhalt rather drede and flee fro the ſwete wordes of flatering preiſers than fro the egre wordes of thy frend that ſaith thee ſothes: Salomon ſaith, that the wordes of a flaterer is a ſnare to cacchen innocentes: he ſayth alſo, He that ſpeketh to his frend wordes of ſweteneſſe and of pleſaunce, he ſetteth a net beſorne his feet to cacchen him: and therfore ſayth Tullius, Encline not thin eres to flaterers, ne take no conſeil of wordes of flaterie: and Caton ſayth, Aviſe thee wel, and eſchue wordes of ſweteneſſe and of pleſaunce. And eke thou ſhalt eſchue the conſeilling of thin olde enemies that ben reconciled. The book ſayth, that no wight retourneth ſafely into the grace of his olde enemie: and Yſope ſayth, Ne troſt not to hem to which thou haſt ſomtime had werre or enmitee, ne telle hem not thy conſeil: and Senek telleth the cauſe why; It may not be, ſayth he, ther as gret fire hath long time endured that ther ne dwelleth ſom vapour of warmneſſe; and therfore ſaith Salomon, In thin olde foo troſt thou never; for ſikerly though thin enemie be reconciled, and maketh thee chere of humilitee, and louteth to thee with his hed, ne troſt him never, for certes he maketh thilke feined humilitee more for his profite than for any love of thy perſone, becauſe that he demeth to have victorie over thy perſone by ſwiche feined contenance, the which victorie he might not have by ſtrif of werre. And Peter Alphonſe ſayth, Make no felawſhip with thin olde enemies, for if thou do hem bountee they wollen perverten it to wickedneſſe. And eke thou muſt eſchue the conſeilling of hem that ben thy ſervaunts, and beren thee gret reverence, for paraventure they fein it more for drede than for love; and therfore ſaith a philoſophre in this wiſe, Ther is no wight parfitly trewe to him that he to ſore dredeth. And Tullius ſayth, Ther n'is no might ſo gret of any emperour that longe may endure, but if he have more love of the peple than drede. Thou ſhalt alſo eſchue the conſeilling of folk that ben dronkelewe, for they ne can no conſeil hide; for Salomon ſayth, Ther n'is no privetee ther as regneth dronkenneſſe. Ye ſhuln alſo have in ſuſpect the conſeilling of ſwiche folk as conſeille you o thing prively, and conſeille you the contrarie openly; for Caſſiodore ſayth, that it is a manere ſleighte to hinder his enemy whan he ſheweth to don a thing openly, and werketh prively the contrary. Thou ſhalt alſo have in ſuſpect the conſeilling of wicked folk, for hir conſeil is alway ful of fraude. And David ſayth, Bliſful is that man that hath not folwed the conſeilling of ſhrewes. Thou ſhalt alſo eſchue the conſeilling of yonge folk, for hir conſeilling is not ripe, as Salomon ſaith.

Now, Sire, ſith I have ſhewed you of which

folk ye ſhullen take youre conſeil, and of which folk ye ſhullen eſchue the conſeil, now wol I teche you how ye ſhuln examine your conſeil after the doctrine of Tullius. In examining than of your conſeillours, ye ſhuln conſidre many thinges. Alder firſt, thou ſhalt conſidre that in thilke thing that thou purpoſeſt, and upon what thing that thou wolt have conſeil, that veray trouthe be ſaid and conſerved; this is to ſay, telle trewely thy tale; for he that ſayth falſe may not wel be conſeilled in that cas of which he lieth. And after this thou ſhalt conſidre the thinges that accorden to that thou purpoſeſt for to do by thy conſeillours, if reſon accord therto, and eke if thy might may atteine therto, and if the more part and the better part of thin conſeillours accorden therto or no. Than ſhalt thou conſidre what thing ſhal ſolwe of that conſeilling, as hate, pees, werre, grace, profite, or domage, and many other thinges, and in alle thinges thou ſhalt cheſe the beſte, and weive all other thinges. Than ſhalt thou conſidre of what roote is engendred the matere of thy conſeil, and what fruit it may conceive and engendre. Thou ſhalt eke conſidre alle the cauſes from whennes they ben ſprongen. And whan thou haſt examined thy conſeil, as I have ſaid, and which partie is the better and more profitable, and haſt appreved it by many wiſe folk and olde, than ſhalt thou conſidre if thou mayſt performe it and maken of it a good ende; for certes reſon wol not that any man ſhulde beginne a thing but if he mighte performe it as him oughte, ne no wight ſhulde take upon him ſo hevy a charge that he might not beren it, for the proverbe ſayth, He that to muche embraceth diſtreineth litel; and Caton ſaith, Aſſay to do ſwiche thinges as thou haſt power to don, leſt the charge oppreſſe thee ſo ſore that thee behoveth to weive thing that thou haſt begonne. And if ſo be that thou be in doute whether thou mayſt performe a thing or non, cheſe rather to ſuffre than to beginne. And Peter Alphonſe ſayth, If thou haſt might to don a thing of which thou muſt repente, it is better nay than ya; this is to ſayn, that thee is better to holde thy tonge ſtille than for to ſpeke. Than mayſt thou underſtonde by ſtronger reſons, that if thou haſt power to perſorme a werk of which thou ſhalt repente, than is thee better that thou ſuffre than beginne. Wel ſayn they that defenden every wight to aſſaye a thing of which he is in doute whether he may performe it or non. And after whan ye han examined your conſeil as I have ſaid beſorne, and knowen wel that ye moun performe your empriſe, conſerme it than ſadly til it be at an ende. Now is it reſon and time that I ſhewe you whan and wherſore that you maun chaunge your conſeil withouten repreve. Sothly a man may change his purpos and his conſeil if the cauſe ceſeth, or whan a newe cas betideth; for the lawe ſaith, that upon thinges that newly betiden behoveth newe conſeil; and Seneca ſayth, If thy conſeil is comen to the eres of thin enemies chaunge thy conſeil. Thou mayſt alſo chaunge thy conſeil, if ſo be that thou find that by errour or by other cauſe, harme or damage may betide: alſo if thy conſeil be diſhoneſte, other elles come of diſhoneſte cauſe, chaunge thy conſeil; for the lawes ſain that all beheſtes that ben diſhoneſte ben of no value; and eke if ſo be that it be impoſſible, or may not goodly be performed or kept.

And take this for a general reule, that every conſeil that is affermed ſo ſtrongly that it may not be chaunged for no condition that may betide, I ſay that thilke conſeil is wicked.

This Melibeus, whan he had herd the doctrine of his wif Dame Prudence, anſwered in this wiſe: Dame, quod he, as yet unto this time ye han wel and covenably taught me, as in general, how I ſhal governe me in the cheſing and in the withholding of my conſeillours; but now wold I fain that you wold condeſcend in eſpecial, and telle me how liketh you or what ſemeth you by oure counſeillours that we han choſen in oure preſent nede.

My Lord, quod ſhe, I beſeche you in alle humbleſſe that ye wel not wilfully replie agein my reſons, ne diſtempre your herte, though I ſpeke thing that you diſpleſe, for God wote that as in min entente I ſpeke it for your beſte, for youre honour and for youre profit eke, and ſothly I hope that youre benignitee wol taken it in patience. And troſteth me wel, quod ſhe, that youre conſeil as in this cas ne ſhulde not (as to ſpeke proprely) be called a conſeilling, but a motion or a-meving of folie, in which conſeil ye han erred in many a ſondry wiſe.

Firſt and forward, ye han erred in the aſſembling of youre conſeillours, for ye ſholde firſt han cleped a fewe folk to youre conſeil, and after ye mighte han ſhewed it to mo folk if it hadde be nede; but certes ye han ſodeinly cleped to your conſeil a gret multitude of peple, ful chargeant, and ful anoyous for to here. Alſo ye han erred, for ther as ye ſhulde han only cleped to youre conſeile youre trewe frendes olde and wiſe, ye han cleped ſtraunge folk, yonge folk, falſe flaterers, and enemies reconciled, and folk that don you reverence withouten love. And eke ye han erred, for ye han brought with you to youre conſeil ire, coveitiſe, and haſtifneſſe, the which three thinges ben contrary to every conſeil honeſt and profitable, the which three thinges ye ne han not anientiſſed or deſtroyed neither in youreſelf ne in youre conſeillours as you ought. Ye han erred alſo, for ye han ſhewed to youre conſeillours youre talent and youre affections to make werre anon, and for to do vengeaunce, and they han eſpied by youre wordes to what thing ye ben enclined, and therfore han they conſeilled you rather to youre talent than to youre profite. Ye han erred alſo, for it ſemeth that you ſufficeth to han ben conſeilled by thiſe conſeillours only, and with litel avis, wheras in ſo high and ſo gret a nede it had ben neceſſarie mo conſeillours and more deliberation to performe youre empriſe. Ye han erred alſo, for ye han not examined your conſeil in the foreſaid manere, ne in due manere as the cas requireth. Ye han erred alſo, for ye han maked no diviſion betwix youre conſeillours; this is to,

ſayn, betwix youre trewe frendes and youre feined conſeillours; ne ye han not knowe the wille of youre trewe frendes olde and wiſe, but ye han caſt alle hir wordes in an hochepot, and enclined your herte to the more part and to the greter nombre, and ther be ye condeſcended: and ſith ye wot wel that men ſhuln alway finde a greter nombre of fooles than of wiſe men, and therfore the conſeillings that ben at congregations and multitudes of folk, ther as men take more regard to the nombre than to the ſapience of perſones, ye ſeen wel that in ſwiche conſeillings fooles han the maiſtrie. Melibeus anſwered and ſaid agein; I graunte wel that I have erred, but ther as thou haſt told me herebeforne that he n'is not to blame that chaungeth his conſeil in certain cas, and for certain and juſt cauſes, I am al ready to chaunge my conſeil right as thou wolt deviſe. The proverbe ſayth, For to don ſinne is manniſh, but certes for to perſevere in ſinne is werke of the devil.

To this ſentence anſwered anon Dame Prudence, and ſaide; Examineth (quod ſhe) wel your conſeil, and let us ſee the which of hem han ſpoken moſt reſonably, and taught you beſt conſeil: and for as muche as the examination is neceſſarie, let us beginne at the ſurgiens and at the phyſiciens that firſt ſpaken in this mater. I ſay that phyſiciens and ſurgiens han ſayde you in youre conſeil diſcretly as hem oughte, and in hir ſpeche ſaiden ful wiſely that to the office of hem apperteineth to don to every wight honour and profite, and no wight to anoye, and after hir craft to don gret diligence unto the cure of hem which that they han in hir governaunce. And, Sire, right as they han anſwered wiſely and diſcretly, right ſo rede I that they be highly and ſoverainly guerdoned for hir noble ſpeche, and eke for they ſhulden do the more ententif beſineſſe in the curation of thy dere doughter: for al be it ſo that they ben youre frendes, therfore ſhullen ye not ſuffren that they ſerve you for nought, but ye oughte the rather guerdene hem, and ſhewe hem youre largeſſe. And as touching the propoſition which the phyſiciens entreteden in this cas, this is to ſain, that in maladies that a contrarie is wariſhed by another contrarie, I wold fain knowe how ye underſtonde thilke text, and what is your ſentence. Certes, quod Melibeus, I underſtond it in this wiſe, that right as they han don me a contrarie, righte ſo ſhulde I don hem another; for right as they han venged hem upon me and don me wrong, right ſo ſhal I venge me upon hem and don hem wrong, and than have I cured a contrarie by another.

Lo, lo! quod Dame Prudence, how lightly is every man enclined to his owen deſire and his owen pleſance! Certes (quod ſhe) the wordes of the phyſiciens ne ſhulden not han ben underſtonden in that wiſe, for certes wickedneſſe is not contrarie to wickedneſſe, ne vengeaunce to vengeaunce, ne wrong to wrong, but they ben ſemblable, and and therfore a vengeaunce is not wariſhed by another vengeaunce, ne a wrong by another wrong, but everich of hem encreſeth and aggreggeth other. But certes the wordes of the phyſiciens ſhulden ben underſtonde in this wiſe, for good and wickedneſſe ben two contraries, and pees and werre, vengeaunce and ſuffraunce, diſcord and accord, and many other thinges; but certes wickedneſſe ſhal be wariſhed by goodneſſe, diſcord by accord, werre by pees, and ſo forth of other thinges. And hereto accordeth Seint Poule the apoſtle in many places; he ſayth, Ne yelde not harme for harme, ne wicked ſpeche for wicked ſpeche, but do wel to him that doth to thee harme, and bleſſe him that faith to thee harme: and in many other places he amoneſteth pees and accord. But now wol I ſpeke to you of the conſeil which that was yeven to you by the men of lawe, and the wiſe folk and old folke, that ſayden alle by on accord as ye han herd beforne, that over alle thinges ye ſhuln do your diligence to kepe your perſone, and to warneſtore your houſe; and ſaiden alſo, that in this cas you oughte for to werchen ful aviſely and with gret deliberation. And, Sire, as to the firſt point, that toucheth the keping of youre perſone, ye ſhuln underſtond that he that hath werre ſhal ever more devoutly and mekely preien beforne alle thinges that Jeſu Criſt of his mercie wol han him in his protection, and ben his ſoveraine helping at his nede; for certes in this world ther is no wight that may be conſeilled ne kept ſuffiſantly withoute the keping of oure Lord Jeſu Criſt. To this ſentence accordeth the prophete David, that ſayth, If God ne kepe the citee in idel waketh he that kepeth it. Now, Sire, than ſhuln ye committe the keping of youre perſone to youre trewe frendes that ben appreved and yknowe, and of hem ſhuln ye axen helpe youre perſone for to kepe; for Caton ſaith, If thou have nede of helpe, axe it of thy frendes, for ther n'is non ſo good a phyſicien as thy trewe frend. And after this than ſhuln ye kepe you fro alle ſtraunge folk, and fro lieres, and have alway in ſuſpect hir compaignie; for Piers Alphonſe ſayth, Ne take no compaignie by the way of a ſtraunge man, but if ſo be that thou have knowen him of lenger time; and if ſo be that he falle into thy compaignie paraventure withouten thin aſſent, enquere than as ſubtilly as thou maiſt of his converſation, and of his lif beforne, and feine thy way, ſaying thou wolt go thider as thou wolt not go; and if he bere a ſpere hold thee on the right ſide, and if he bere a ſwerd hold thee on his left ſide. And after this than ſhuln ye kepe you wiſely from all ſwiche manere peple as I have ſayed before, and hem and hir conſeil eſchue. And after this than ſhuln ye kepe you in ſwiche manere that for any preſumption of youre ſtrengthe that ye ne deſpiſe not ne account not the might of your adverſary ſo lite that ye let the keping of youre perſone for your preſumption, for every wiſe man dredeth his enemie: and Salomon ſayth, Welful is he that of alle hath drede; for certes he that thurgh the hardineſſe of his herte, and thurgh the hardineſſe of himſelf, hath to gret preſumption, him ſhal evil betide. Than ſhuln ye evermo countrewaite emboyſſements and alle eſpiaile; for Seneck ſayth, that the wiſe man that dredeth harmes eſchueth harmes, ne he ne falleth into perils that

perils eſchueth. And al be it ſo that it ſeme that thou art in ſiker place, yet ſhalt thou alway do thy diligence in keping of thy perſone; this is to ſayn, ne be not negligent to kepe thin perſone not only fro thy greteſt enemy but alſo fro thy leſte enemy. Senek ſayth, A man that is wel aviſed he dredeth his leſte enemie; Ovide ſayth, that the litel weſel wol flee the gret boll and the wilde hart; and the book ſayth, A litel thorne may prikke a king ful ſore; and a litel hound wol hold the wilde bore. But natheles I ſay not thou ſhalt be ſo coward that thou doute wher as is no drede. The book ſaith that * ſom men [han taught he hir deceivour, for they han to much dreded] to be deceived. Yet ſhalt thou drede to be empoyſoned and [therfore ſhalt thou] kepe thee fro the compagnie of ſcorners; for the book ſayth, With ſcorners ne make no compagnie, but flee hir wordes as venime.

Now as to the ſecond point, wheras youre wiſe conſeillours conſeilled you to warneſtore your hous with gret diligence, I wolde fain knowe how that ye underſtonde thilke wordes, and what is your ſentence.

Melibeus anſwered and ſaide; Certes I underſtond it in this wiſe, that I ſhal warneſtore min hous with toures, ſwiche as han caſtelles and other manere edifices, and armure, and artelries, by which thinges I may my perſone and myn hous ſo kepen and defenden that min enemies ſhuln ben in drede min hous for to approche.

To this ſentence anſwered anon Prudence: Warneſtoring (quod ſhe) of heighe toures and of gret edifices, is with grete coſtages and with grete travaille, and whan that they ben accompliced yet ben they not worth a ſtre, but if they ben defended by trewe frendes that ben olde and wiſe. And underſtonde wel that the greteſte and ſtrongeſte garneſon that a riche man may have, as wel to kepen his perſone as his goodes, is, that he be beloved with his ſubgets and with his neighebours; for thus ſayth Tullius, that ther is a maner garneſon that no man may venquiſh ne diſcomfite, and that is a lord to be beloved of his citizeins and of his peple.

Now, Sire, as to the thridde point, wheras youre olde and wiſe conſeillours ſayden that you ne oughte not ſodeinly ne haſtily proceden in this nede, but that you oughte purveyen and appareilen you in this cas with gret diligence and gret deliberation, trewely I trowe that they ſayden right wiſely and right ſoth; for Tullius ſayth, In every nede er thou beginne it appareile thee with gret diligence. Than ſay I that in vengeaunce taking in werre, in bataille, and in warneſtoring, er thou beginne I rede that thou appareile thee therto, and do it with gret deliberation; for Tullius ſayth that longe appareiling tofore the bataille maketh ſhort victorie; and Caſſiodorus ſayth, The garneſon is ſtronger whan it is longe time aviſed.

But now let us ſpeken of the conſeil that was accorded by youre neighebours ſwiche as don you reverence withouten love, youre olde enemies reconciled, your flatereres, that conſeilled you certain thinges prively, and openly conſeilled you the contrarie, the yonge folk alſo, that conſeilled you to venge you and to make werre anon. Certes, Sire, as I have ſayde beforne, ye han gretly erred to han cleped ſwiche maner folk to youre conſeil, which conſeillours ben ynough reproved by the reſons aforeſaid: but natheles, let us now deſcende to the ſpecial. Ye ſhul firſt proceden after the doctrine of Tullius. Certes the trouthe of this matere or of this conſeil nedeth not diligently to enquire, for it is wel wiſt which they ben that han don to you this trespas and vilanie, and how many treſpaſours, and in what manere, they han don to you all this wrong and all this vilanie. And after this than ſhuln ye examine the ſecond condition which that the ſame Tullius addeth in this matere; for Tullius putteth a thing which that he clepeth Conſenting; this to ſayn, who ben they, and which ben they, and how many, that conſenten to thy conſeil in thy wilfulneſſe to don haſtif vengeaunce. And let us conſidre alſo who ben they, and how many ben they, and which ben they, that conſenteden to youre adverſaries. As to the firſt point, it is wel knowen which folk they be that conſenteden to youre wilfulneſſe, for trewely all tho that conſeileden you to maken ſodein werre ne ben not youre frendes. Let us now conſidre which ben they that ye holden ſo gretly youre frendes as to youre perſone, for al be it ſo that ye be mighty and riche, certes ye ne ben but allone; for certes ye ne han no child but a doughter, ne ye ne han no brethren, ne coſins germains, ne non other nigh kinrede, wherfore that your enemies for drede ſhulde ſtinte to pleds with you or to deſtroye youre perſone. Ye knowen alſo that your richeſſes moten ben diſpended in diverſe parties, and whan that every wight hath his part they ne wollen taken but litel regard to venge youre deth. But thin enemies ben three, and they han many brethren, children, coſins, and other nigh kinrede; and though ſo were that thou haddeſt ſlain of hem two or three, yet dwellen ther ynow to wreken hir deth, and to flee thy perſone. And though ſo be that youre kinrede be more ſtedefaſt and ſiker than the kin of your adverſaries, yet natheles youre kinrede is but a fer kinrede; they ben but litel ſibbe to you, and the kin of youre enemies ben nigh ſibbe to hem; and certes as in that hir condition is better than youres. Than let us conſidere alſo of the conſeilling of hem that conſeilled you to take ſodein vengeaunce, whether it accorde to reſon; and certes ye knowe wel nay; for as by right and reſon ther may no man taken vengeaunce on no wight but the juge that hath the juriſdiction of it, whan it is ygraunted him to take thilke vengeaunce haſtily or attemprely as the lawe requireth.

* This paſſage, which is defective in all the mſſ. I have patched upas well as I could, by adding the words between hooks from the French Melibee, where it ſtands thus; "Aucunes gens ont enfeigne leur decevour, car ils ont "trop doubte que on ne les deceuſt. Apres tu te dois "garder de venim, et ſi te dois garder de compaignie de "mocqueurs, car il eſt eſcript, Avec les mocqueurs n'ares "compaignie, et fuy leurs paroles comme de venim."—*Ty. wrote.*

And moreover of thilke word that Tullius clepeth Conſenting, thou ſhalt conſidere if thy might and thy power may conſente and ſuffice to thy wilfulneſſe and to thy conſeillours; and certes thou mayeſt wel ſay that Nay; for ſikerly, as for to ſpeke proprely, we moun do nothing but only ſwiche thing as we moun don rightfully; and certes rightfully ye ne mowe take no vengeaunce, as of your propre auctorite. Than mowe ye ſen that your power ne conſenteth not ne accordeth not to your wilfulneſſe. Now let us examine the thridde point, that Tullius clepeth Conſequent. Thou ſhalt underſtonde that the vengeaunce that thou purpoſeſt for to take is the conſequent, and theroffolweth another vengeaunce, peril, and werre, and other damages without nombre, of which we ben not ware as at this time. And as touching the fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth Engendering, thou ſhalt conſider that this wrong which that is don to thee is engendred of the hate of thin enemies, and of the vengeaunce taking upon that wold engender another vengeaunce, and muchel ſorwe and waſting of richeſſes, as I ſayde ere.

Now, Sire, as to the point that Tullius clepeth Cauſes, which that is the laſt point, thou ſhalt underſtonde that the wrong that thou haſt received hath certaine cauſes which that clerkes clepen *oriens* and *efficiens*, and *cauſa longinqua*, and *cauſa propinqua*; this is to ſayn, the fer cauſe and the nigh cauſe. The fer cauſe is almighty God, that is cauſe of alle thinges; the ner cauſe is thin three enemies; the cauſe accidental was hate; the cauſe material ben the five woundes of thy doughter; the cauſe formal is the maner of hir werking, that broughten ladders and clomben in at thy windowes; the cauſe final was for to ſlee thy doughter: it letted not in as muche as in hem was. But for to ſpeke of the fer cauſe, as to what ende they ſhuld come, or what ſhal finally betide of hem in this cas, ne can I not deme but by conjecting and ſuppoſing; for we ſhuln ſuppoſe that they ſhuln come to a wicked ende, becauſe that the book of Decrees ſayth, Selden or with gret peine ben cauſes ybrought to a good ende whan they ben badly begonne.

Now, Sire, if men wold axen me why that God ſuffred men to do you this vilanie, certes I can not wel anſwer as for no ſothfaſtneſſe; for the apoſtle ſayth that the ſciences and the jugements of oure Lord God Almighty ben ful depe; ther may no man comprehend ne ſerche hem ſuffiſantly; natheles, by certain preſumptions and conjectings I hold and beleve that God, which that is ful of juſtice and of rightwiſeneſſe, hath ſuffered this betide by juſt cauſe reſonable.

Thy name is Melibee, this is to ſayn, a man that drinketh hony. Thou haſt dronke ſo muche hony of ſwete temporel richeſſes, and delices, and honours of this world, that thou art dronken, and haſt forgetten Jeſu Criſt thy creatour: thou ne haſt not don to him ſwiche honour and reverence as thee ought, ne thou ne haſt wel ytaken kepe to the wordes of Ovide, that ſayth, Under the honey of the goodes of thy body is hid the venime that ſleth the ſoule: and Salomon ſayth, If thou haſt founden hony, ete of it that ſufficeth; for if thou ete of it out of meſure thou ſhalt ſpewe, and be nedy and poure. And peraventure Criſt hath thee in deſpit, and hath tourned away fro thee his face and his eres of miſericorde, and alſo he hath ſuffred that thou haſt ben puniſhed in the manere that thou haſt ytreſpaſed. Thou haſt don ſinne again oure Lord Criſt, for certes the three enemies of mankind, that is to ſayn, the fleſh, the fend, and the world, thou haſt ſuffred hem entre into thin herte wilfully by the windowes of thy body, and haſt not defended thyſelf ſuffiſantly agein hir aſſautes and hir temptations, ſo that they han wounded thy ſoule in five places; this is to ſayn, the dedly ſinnes that ben entred into thyn herte by thy five wittes: and in the ſame manere our Lord Criſt hath wold and ſuffred that thy three enemies ben entred into thyn hous by the windowes, and han ywounded thy doughter in the foreſayd manere.

Certes, quod Melibee, I ſee wel that ye enforce you muchel by wordes to overcomen me in ſwiche manere that I ſhal not venge me on min enemies, ſhewing me the perils and the evils that mighten falle of this vengeaunce; but who ſo wolde conſidre in all vengeaunces the perils and evils that mighten ſue of vengeaunce taking a man wold never take vengeaunce, and that were harme; for by the vengeaunce taking ben the wicked men diſſevered fro the goode men, and they that han will to do wickedneſſe reſtreinen hir wicked purpos whan they ſen the puniſhing and the chaſtiſing * of the treſpaſours. [To this anſwered Dame Prudence: Certes, quod ſhe, I graunte you that of vengeaunce taking cometh muche evil and muche good; but vengeaunce taking apperteineth not to everich on, but only to juges, and to hem that han the juriſdiction over the treſpaſours.] And yet ſay I more, that right as a ſinguler perſone ſinneth in taking vengeaunce of another man, right ſo ſinneth the juge if he do no vengeaunce of hem that it han deſerved; for Senek ſayth thus. That maſter (he ſayth) is good that preveth ſhrewes; and Caſſiodore ſayth, A man dredeth to do outrages whan he wot and knoweth that it diſpleſeth to the juges and ſoveraines; and another ſayth, The juge that dredeth to do right maketh men ſhrewes; and Seint Poule the apoſtle ſayth in his epiſtle, whan he writeth unto the Romaines, that the juges beren not the ſpere withouten cauſe, but they beren it to puniſhe the ſhrewes and miſdoers, and for to defende the goode men. If ye wiln than take vengeaunce of youre enemies, ye ſhuln retourne or have your recours to the juge that hath the juriſdiction upon hem, and he ſhal puniſhe hem as the lawe axeth and requireth.

A! ſayd Melibee, this vengeaunce liketh me nothing. I bethink me now and take hede how

* The following paſſage, which the reader will ſee to be very material to the ſenſe, I have tranſlated from the French, and inſerted between crotchets, as before; "Et "a ce reſpont Dame Prudence: Certes, fiſt elle, je trot-"troye que de vengeance vient molt de maulx et de biens, "mais vengeance n'appartient pas a un chaſcun, fors ſeu-"lement aux juges et a ceulx qui ont la juriſdiction ſur les "malfaiteurs".—*Tyrwhitt.*

that Fortune hath nouriſhed me from my childhode, and hath holpen me to paſſe many a ſtronge pas: now wol I aſſayen hire, trowing with Goddes helpe that ſhe ſhal helpe me my ſhame for to venge.

Certes, quod Prudence, if ye wol werke by my conſeil ye ſhuln not aſſaye Fortune by no way, ne ye ne ſhuln not lene or bowe unto hire, after the wordes of Senek; for thinges that ben folily don, and tho that ben don in hope of Fortune, ſhuln never come to good ende. And as the ſame Senek ſayth, The more clere and the more ſhining that Fortune is, the more brotel and the ſoner broke ſhe is. Truſteth not in hire, for ſhe n'is not ſtedefaſt ne ſtable, for whan thou troweſt to be moſt ſiker and ſeure of hire helpe, ſhe wol faille and deceive thee. And wheras ye ſayn that Fortune hath nouriſhed you fro youre childhode, I ſay that in ſo muchel ye ſhuln the leſſe truſte in hire and in hire wit; for Senek ſaith, What man that is noriſhed by Fortune ſhe maketh him a gret fool. Now than ſin ye deſire and axe vengeaunce, and the vengeaunce that is don after the lawe and before the juge ne liketh you not, and the vengeaunce that is don in hope of Fortune is perilous and uncertain, than have ye non other remedie but for to have your recours unto the ſoveraine juge that vengeth alle vilanies and wronges, and he ſhal venge you; after that himſelf witneſſeth wheras he ſaith, Leveth the vengeaunce to me, and I ſhal do it.

Melibeus anſwered, If I ne venge me of the vilanie that men han don to me, I ſompne or warne hem that has don to me vilanie, and alle other, to do me another vilanie; for it is written, If thou take no vengeaunce of an olde vilany, thou ſompneſt thin adverſaries to do thee a newe vilanie: and alſo for my ſuffraunce men wolden do me ſo muche vilanie, that I might neither bere it ne ſuſteine, and ſo ſhulde ben put and holden over lowe; for ſom men ſain, In muchel ſuffring ſhal many thinges falle unto thee which thou ſhalt not mowe ſuffre.

Certes, quod Prudence, I graunte you wel that overmuchel ſuffraunce is not good, but yet ne folweth it not therof that every perſone to whom men don vilanie ſhuld take of it vengeaunce, for that apperteineth and longeth all only to the juges, for they ſhul venge the vilanies and injuries; and therfore tho two auctoritees that ye han ſayd above ben only underſtonden in the juges, for whan they ſuffren overmuchel the wronges and vilanies to be don withouten puniſhing, they ſompne not a man all only for to do newe wronges, but they commaunden it; al ſo as a wiſe man ſayth, that the juge that correcteth not the ſinner commaundeth and biddeth him do ſinne: and the juges and ſoveraines mighten in hir lond ſo muche ſuffre of the ſhrewes and miſdoers, that they ſhuld en by ſwiche ſuffraunce by proces of time wexen of ſwiche power and might, that they ſhulde putte out the juges and the ſoveraines from hir places, and atte laſte maken him leſe hir lordſhippes.

But now let us putte that ye have leve to venge you: I ſay ye be not of might and power as now to venge you; for if ye wol maken compariſon unto the might of youre adverſaries, ye ſhuln finde in many thinges that I have ſhewed you er this that hir condition is better than youres, and therfore ſay I that it is good as now that ye ſuffre and be patient.

Forthermore, ye knowen wel that after the commune ſaw it is a woodneſſe a man to ſtrive with a ſtronger or a more mighty man than he is himſelf; and for to ſtrive with a man of even ſtrengthe, that is to ſay, with as ſtrong a man as he is, it is peril; and for to ſtrive with a weker man it is folie; and therfore ſhulde a man flee ſtriving as muchel as he mighte; for Salomon ſayth, It is a gret worſhip to a man to kepe him fro noiſe and ſtrif. And if it ſo happe that a man of greter mighte and ſtrengthe than thou art do thee grevaunce, ſtudie and beſie thee rather to ſtille the ſame grevaunce than for to venge thee; for Senek ſayth, That he putteth him in a grete peril that ſtriveth with a greter man than he is himſelf; and Caton ſayth, If a man of higher eſtat or degree, or more mighty than thou, do thee anoye or grevance, ſuffre him; for he that ones hath greved thee may another time releve thee and helpe thee. Yet ſette I cas ye have bothe might and licence for to venge you; I ſay that ther ben ful many thinges that ſhuln reſtreine you of vengeaunce taking, and make you for to encline to ſuffre and for to han patience in the wronges that han ben don to you. Firſt and forward, if ye wol conſidre the defautes that ben in youre owen perſone, for which defautes God hath ſuffred you have this tribulation, as I have ſayd to you herebeforne; for the poete ſayth, that we oughten patiently taken the tribulations that comen to us, whan that we thinken and conſideren that we han deſerved to han hem; and Seint Gregorie ſayth, that whan a man conſidereth wel the nombre of his defautes and of his ſinnes, the peines and the tribulations that he ſuffereth ſemen the leſſe unto him; and in as muche as him thinketh his ſinnes more hevy and grevous, in ſo muche ſemeth his peine the lighter and the eſier unto him. Alſo ye owen to encline and bowe youre herte to take the patience of oure Lord Jeſu Criſt, as ſayth Seint Peter in his Epiſtles. Jeſu Criſt (he ſayth) hath ſuffred for us, and yeven enſample to every man to folwe and ſue him, for he did never ſinne, ne never came ther a vilains word out of his mouth. Whan men curſed him he curſed hem nought, and whan men beten him he manaced hem nought. Alſo the gret patience which ſeintes that ben in Paradis han had in tribulations that they han ſuffred withouten hir deſert or gilt, oughte muchel ſtirre you to patience. Forthermore, ye ſhulde enforce you to have patience, conſidering that the tribulations of this world but litel while endure, and ſone paſſed ben and gon, and the joye that a man ſeketh to han by patience in tribulations is perdurable; after that the apoſtle ſayth in his epiſtle, The joye of God, he ſayth, is perdurable, that is to ſayn, everlaſting. Alſo troweth and beleveth ſtedfaſtly that he n'is not wel ynoriſhed ne wel ytaught that cannot have patience, or wol not receive pa-

tience; for Salomon ſayth, that the doctrine and wit of a man is knowen by patience; and in another place he ſayth, that he that is patient governeth him by gret prudence: and the ſame Salomon ſayth, The angrie and wrathful man maketh noiſes, and the patient man attempteth and ſtilleth hem: he ſaith alſo, It is more worth to be patient than to be right ſtrong; and he that may have the lordſhipe of his owen herte is more to preiſe than he that by his force or ſtrengthe taketh gret citees: and therfore ſayth Seint James in his epiſtle, that patience is a gret vertue of perfection.

Certes, quod Melibee, I graunte you, Dame Prudence, that patience is a gret vertue of perfection, but every man may not have the perfection that ye ſeken; ne I am not of the nombre of the right parfit men, for min herte may never be in pees unto the time it be venged. And al be it ſo that it was gret peril to min enemies to do me a vilanie in taking vengeaunce upon me, yet token they non hede of the peril, but fulfilleden hir wicked will and hir corage; and therfore me thinketh men oughten not repreve me though I put me in a litel peril for to venge me, and though I do a gret exceſſe, that is to ſayn, that I venge eh outrage by another.

A! quod Dame Prudence, ye ſayn your will and as you liketh; but in no cas of the world a man ſhulde not don outrage ne exceſſe for to vengen him; for Caſſiodore ſayth, that as evil doth he that vengeth him by outrage as he that doth the outrage; and therfore ye ſhuln venge you after the ordre of right, that is to ſayn, by the lawe, and not by exceſſe ne by outrage. And alſo if ye wol venge you of the outrage of youre adverſaries in other manere than right commaundeth ye ſinnen; and therfore ſayth Senek, that a man ſhal never venge ſhrewedneſſe by ſhrewedneſſe. And if ye ſay that right axeth a man to defende violence by violence, and fighting by fighting, certes ye ſay ſoth, whan the defence is don withouten intervalle, or withouten tarying or delay, for to defende him, and not for to venge: and it behoveth that a man putte ſwiche attemperaunce in his defence that men have no cauſe ne mater to repreve him that defendeth him of outrage and exceſſe, for elles were it againe reſon. Parde ye knowen wel that ye maken no defence as now for to defende you, but for to venge you, and ſo ſheweth it that ye han no will to do your dede attemprely; and therfore me thinketh that patience is good; for Salomon ſayth, that he that is not patient ſhal have gret harme.

Certes, quod Melibee, I graunte you that whan a man is impatient and wrothe of that that toucheth him not, and that apperteineth not unto him, though it harme him, it is no wonder; for the lawe ſaith that he is coupable that entremeteth or medleth with ſwiche thing as apperteineth not unto him; and Salomon ſaith, that he that entremeteth of the noiſe or ſtrif of another man is like to him that taketh a ſtraunge hound by the eres; for right as he that taketh a ſtraunge hound by the eres is other while biten with the hound, right in the ſame wiſe it is reſon that he have harme that by his impatience medleth him of the noiſe of another man, wheras it apperteineth not unto him. But ye knowe wel that this dede, that is to ſayn, my greef and my diſeſe, toucheth me right nigh; and therfore though I be wroth and impatient it is no mervaile: and (ſaving your grace) I cannot ſee that it might gretly harme me though I took vengeaunce, for I am richer and more mighty than min enemies ben; and wel knowe ye that by money and by having grete poſſeſſions ben alle thinges of this world governed; and Salomon ſayth that alle thinges obeye to money.

Whan Prudence had herd hire huſbond avaunte him of his richeſſe and of his money, diſpreiſing the power of his adverſaries, ſhe ſpake and ſayd in this wiſe: Certes, dere Sire! I graunte you that ye ben riche and mighty, and that richeſſes ben good to hem that han wel ygeten hem, and that wel conne uſen hem; for right as the body of a man may not liven withouten foul, no more may it liven withouten temporel goodes, and by richeſſes may a man geté him grete frendes; and therfore ſayth Pamphilus, If a netherdes doughter (be ſayth) be riche, ſhe may chefe of a thouſand men which ſhe wol take to hire huſbond; for of a thouſand men on wol not forſaken hire ne refuſen hire. And this Pamphilus ſaith alſo, If thou be right happy, that is to ſayn, if thou be right riche, thou ſhalt finde a gret nombre of felawes and frendes; and if thy fortune chaange, that thou wexe poure, farewel frendſhipe and felawſhipe, for thou ſhalt be al allone withouten any compaigne, but if it be the compaignie of poure folk. And yet ſayth this Pamphilus moreover, that they that ben bond and thralle of linage ſhuln be made worthy and noble by richeſſes. And right ſo as by richeſſes ther comen many goodes, right ſo by poverte come ther many harmes and eviles, for gret poverte conſtreineth a man to do many eviles: and therfore clepeth Caſſiodore poverte the moder of ruine, that is to ſayn, the moder of overthrowing or falling doun; and therfore ſayth Piers Alfonſe, On of the greteſt adverſitees of this world is whan a free man by kinde, or of birthe, is conſtreined by poverte to eten the almeſſe of his enemie. And the ſame ſayth Innocent in on of his bookes: he ſayth, that forweful and miſhappy is the condition of a poure begger, for if he axe not his mete he dieth for hunger, and if he axe he dieth for ſhame; and algates neceſſitee conſtreineth him to axe; and therfore ſayth Salomon, that better it is to die than for to have ſwiche poverte; and, as the ſame Salomon ſayth, Better it is to die of bitter deth than for to liven in ſwiche wiſe. By thiſe reſons that I have ſaid unto you, and by many other reſons that I coude ſaye, I graunte you that richeſſes ben good to hem that wel geten hem, and to hem that wel uſen tho richeſſes; and therfore wol I ſhewe you how ye ſhuln behave you in gadering of your richeſſes, and in what manere ye ſhuln uſen hem.

Firſt, ye ſhuln geten hem withouten gret deſir, by good leiſer, ſokingly, and not over haſtifly, for a man that is to deſiring to get richeſſes abandoneth him firſte to theſte and to alle other eviles; and therfore ſayth Salomon, He that haſteth him to befily to wexe riche he ſhal be non innocent: he ſayth alſo, that the richeſſe that hafily cometh to a man ſone and lightly goeth and paſſeth from a man, but that richeſſe that cometh litel and litel wexeth alway and multiplieth. And, Sire, ye ſhulen gete richeſſes by youre wit and by youre travaille, unto youre profite, and that withouten wrong or harme doing to any other perſone; for the lawe ſayth, Ther maketh no man himſelf riche if he do harme to another wight; this is to ſay, that Nature defendeth and forbedeth by right that no man make himſelf riche unto the harme of another perſone. And Tullius ſayth, that no ſorwe, ne no drede of deth, ne nothing that may falle unto a man, is ſo muchel ageins nature as a man to encreſe his owen profite to harme of another man. And though the grete men and the mighty men geten richeſſes more lightly than thou, yet ſhalt thou not ben idel ne lowe to do thy profite, for thou ſhalt in alle wiſe flee idleneſſe; for Salomon ſayth, that idleneſſe techeth a man to do many eviles: and the ſame Salomon ſayth, that he that travailleth and beſieth him to tillen his lond ſhal ete bred, but he that is idel, and caſteth him to no beſineſſe ne occupation, ſhal falle into poverte, and die for hunger. And he that is idel and ſlow can never find covenable time for to do his profite; for ther is a verſifiour ſayth, that the idel man excuſeth him in winter becauſe of the grete cold, and in ſommer they by encheſon of the hete. For thiſe cauſes, ſayth Caton, Waketh, and enclineth you not over muchel to ſlepe, for over muchel reſte norſiſheth and cauſeth many vices; and therfore ſayth Seint Jerome, Doeth ſom good dedes, that the devil which is oure enemie ne finde you not unoccupied, for the devil he taketh not lightly unto his werking ſwiche as he findeth occupied in goode werkes.

Than thus in geting richeſſes ye muſten flee idleneſſe; and afterward ye ſhuln uſen the richeſſes which ye han geten by youre wit and by youre travaille in ſwiche manere than men holde you not to ſcarce ne to ſparing, ne fool-large, that is to ſay, over large a ſpender; for right as men blamen an avaricious man becauſe of his ſcarcitee and chincherie, in the ſame wiſe is he to blame that ſpendeth over largely; and therfore ſaith Caton, Uſe (ſayth he) the richeſſes that thou haſt ygeten in ſwiche manere that men have no matere ne cauſe to calle thee nother wretche ne chince, for it is a gret ſhame to a man to have a poure herte and a riche purſe: he ſayth alſo, The goodes that thou haſt ygeten uſe hem by meſure, that is to ſayn, ſpende meſurably, for they that ſolily waſten and diſpenden the goodes that they han whan they han no more propre of hir owen that they praien hem to take the goodes of another man. I ſay than that ye ſhuln flee avarice, uſing youre richeſſes in ſwiche manere that men ſayn not that youre richeſſes ben yberied, but that ye have hem in youre might and in youre welding; for a wiſe man repreveth the avaricious man, and ſayth thus in two vers, Wherto and why berieth a man his goodes by his gret avarice, and knoweth wel that nedes muſt he die, for deth is the end of every man as in this preſent lif? and for what cauſe or encheſon joineth he him, or knitteth he him ſo faſt unto his goodes, that alle his wittes mown not diſſeveren him or departen him from his goodes, and knoweth wel, or oughte to know, that whan he is ded he ſhal nothing bere with him out of this world? and therfore ſayth Seint Auguſtien, that the avaricious man is likened unto helle, that the more it ſwalweth the more deſir it hath to ſwalwe and devoure. And as wel as ye wolde eſchue to be called an avaricious man or chinche, as wel ſhulde ye kepe you and governe you in ſwiche a wiſe that men calle you not fool-large; therfore ſaith Tullius, The goodes of thin hous ne ſhulde not ben hid ne kept ſo cloſe but that they might ben opened by pitee and debonairetee, that is to ſayn, to yeve hem part that han gret nede; ne thy goodes ſhulden not ben ſo open to be every mannes goodes. Afterward, in getting of youre richeſſes, and in uſing of hem, ye ſhuln alway have three thinges in youre herte, that is to ſay, oure Lord God, conſcience, and good name. Firſt, ye ſhuln have God in youre herte, and for no richeſſe ye ſhuln do nothing which may in any manere diſpleſe God that is youre creatour and maker; for, after the word of Salomon, It is better to have a litel good, with love of God, than to have muchel good and leſe the love of his Lord God: and the prophete ſayth, that better it is to ben a good man and have litel good and treſor than to be holden a ſhrewe and have grete richeſſes. And yet I ſay forthermore, that ye ſhulden alway do youre beſineſſe to gete you richeſſes, ſo that ye gete hem with good conſcience. And the apoſtle ſayth, that there n'is thing in this world of which we ſhulden have ſo gret joye as whan oure conſcience bereth us good witneſſe; and the wiſe man ſayth, The ſubſtaunce of a man is ful good whan ſinne is not in mannes conſcience. Afterward, in geting of youre richeſſes and in uſing of hem, ye muſt have gret beſineſſe and gret diligence that youre good name be alway kept and conſerved; for Salomon ſayth, that beter it is and more it availeth a man to have a good name than for to have grete richeſſes; and therfore he ſayth in another place, Do gret diligence (ſaith Salomon) in keping of thy frendes and of thy good name, for it ſhal lenger abide with thee than any treſor, be it never ſo precious; and certes he ſhulde not be called a Gentilman that after God and good conſcience alle thinges leſt ne doth his diligence and beſineſſe to kepen his good name; and Caſſiodore ſayth, that it is a ſigne of a gentil herte whan a man loveth and deſireth to have a good name; and therefore ſayth Seint Auguſtine, that ther ben two thinges that arn right neceſſarie and nedeful, and that is good conſcience and good

los; that is it to ſayn, good conſcience to thin owen perſone inward, and good los for thy neighebour outward. And he that troſteth him ſo muchel in his good conſcience that he deſpiſeth and ſetteth at nought his good name or los, and recketh not though he kepe not his good name, n'is but a eruel cherl.

Sire, now have I ſhewed you how ye ſhulden do in geting richeſſes, and how ye ſhulen uſen hem; and I ſee wel that for the truſt that ye han in youre richeſſes, ye wiln meve werre and bataille. I conſeille you that ye beginne no bataille ne werre in truſt of youre richeſſes, for they ne ſufficen not werres to mainteine; and therfore ſayth a philoſophre, That man that deſireth and wol algates han werre ſhal never have ſuffiſaunce, for the richer that he is the greter diſpences muſt he make, if he will have worſhip and victorie; and Salomon ſaith, that the greter richeſſes that a man hath the mo diſpendours he hath. And, dere Sire! al be it ſo that for youre richeſſes ye moun have muchel folk, yet behoveth it not ne it is not good to beginne werre, wheras you moun in other manere have pees unto youre worſhip and profite: for the victorie of batailles that ben in this world lith not in gret nombre or multitude of peple, ne in the vertue of man, but it lith in the will and in the hond of oure Lord God Almighty; and therefore Judas Machabeus, which was Goddes knight, whan he ſhulde fighte again his adverſarie that hadde a greter nombre and a greter multitude of folk, and ſtrenger than was the peple of this Machabee, yet he recomforted his litel compaignie, and ſayde right in this wiſe; Al ſo lightly (ſayde he) may our Lord God Almighty yeve victorie to a fewe folk as to many folk, for the victorie of a bataille cometh not by the gret nombre of peple, but it cometh from oure Lord God of heven. And, dere Sire! for as muchel as ther is no man certaine if it be worthy that God yeve him victorie or not, after that Salomon ſayth, Therfore every man ſhulde gretly drede werres to beginne; and becauſe that in batailles fallen many perils, and it happeth other while that as ſone is the gret man ſlain as the litel man; and, as it is ywritten in the ſecond book of Kinges, The dedes of batailles ben aventurous, and nothing certain, for as lightly is on hurt with a ſpere as another; and for ther is gret peril in werre, therfore ſhulde a man flee and eſchue werre in as muchel as a man may goodly; for Salomon ſeyth, He that loveth peril ſhal falle in peril.

After that Dame Prudence had ſpoken in this manere, Melibee anſwerd and ſaide: I ſee wel, Dame Prudence, that by youre faire wordes and by youre reſons that ye han ſhewed me that the werre liketh you nothing; but I have not yet herd your conſeil how I ſhal do in this nede.

Certes, quod ſhe, I conſeille you that ye accorde with youre adverſaries, and that ye have pees with hem; for Seint James ſayth in his epiſtle that by concorde and pees the ſmale richeſſes wexen grete, and by debat and diſcorde grete richeſſes fallen doun; and ye knowen wel that on of the greteſt and moſte ſoveraine thing that is in this world is unitee and pees; and therfore ſayde oure Lord Jeſu Criſt to his apoſtles in this wiſe, Wel happy and bleſſed ben they that loven and purchaſen pees, for they ben called the children of God. A! quod Melibee, now ſee I wel that ye loven not min honour ne my worſhipe. Ye knowen wel that min adverſaries han begonne this debat and brige by hir outrage, and ye ſee wel that they ne requeren ne prayen me not of pees, ne they axen not to be reconciled; wol ye than that I go and meke me and obeye me to hem, and crie hem mercie? forſoth that were not my worſhipe; for right as men ſayn that overgret homlineſſe engendreth diſpreiſing, ſo fareth it by to gret humilitee or mekeneſſe.

Than began Dame Prudence to make ſemblaunt of wrathe, and ſayde, Certes, Sire, (ſauf your grace) I love youre honour and youre profite as I do mine owen, and ever have don, ye ne non other ſeyn never the contrary; and if I had ſayde that ye ſhuld han purchaſed the pees and the reconciliation, I ne hadde not muchel miſtake me ne ſayde amis; for the wiſe man ſayth, The diſſention beginneth by another man, and the reconciling beginneth by thyſelf: and the prophete ſaith, Flee ſhrewedneſſe and do goodneſſe: ſeke pees and folwe it, in as muchel as in thee is. Yet ſay I not that ye ſhuln rather purſue to youre adverſaries for pees than they ſhuln to you, for I know wel that ye ben ſo hard-herted that ye wol do nothing for me; and Salomon ſayth, He that hath over hard an herte atte laſte he ſhal miſhappe and miſtide.

Whan Melibee had herd Dame Prudence make ſemblaunt of wrath he ſayde in this wiſe: Dame, I pray you that ye be not diſpleſed of things that I ſay, for I knowe wel that I am angry and wroth, and that is no wonder, and they that ben wroth woten not wel what they don ne what they ſayn; therfore the prophete ſayth, that troubled eyen han no clere ſighte. But ſayth and conſeilleth me as you liketh, for I am redy to do right as ye wol deſire; and if ye repreve me of my folie I am the more holden to love you and to preiſe you; for Salomon ſaith, that he that repreveth him that doth folie he ſhal find greter grace than he that deceiveth him by ſwete wordes.

Than ſayde Dame Prudence, I make no ſemblaunt of wrath ne of anger but for youre grete profite; for Salomon ſaith, He is more wroth that repreveth or chideth a fool for his folie, ſhewing him ſemblaunt of wrath, than he that ſupporteth him and preiſeth him in his miſdoing, and laugheth at his folie; and this ſame Salomon ſaith afterward, that by the ſorweful viſage of a man, that is to ſayn, by the ſory and hevy countenance of a man, the fool correcteth and amendeth himſelf.

Than ſaid Melibee, I ſhal not conne anſwere unto ſo many faire reſons as ye putten to me and ſhewen: ſayth ſhortly youre will and youre conſeil, and I am al redy to performe and fulfille it.

Than Dame Prudence discovered all hire will unto him, and saide, I conseille you, quod she, above alle thinges that ye make pees betwene God and you, and be reconciled unto him and to his grace, for as I have sayde you herebeforen, God hath suffered yon to have this tribulation and disese for youre sinnes: and if ye do as I say you, God wol sende youre adversaries unto you, and make hem falle at youre feet, redy to do youre will and youre commandements; for Salomon sayth, Whan the condition of man is plesaunt and liking unto God, he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries, and constreineth him to beseechen him of pees and of grace. And I pray you let me speke with your adversaries in prevee place, for they shuln not knowe that it be of youre will or youre assent, and than whan I knowe hir will and hir entente I may conseille you the more seurely.

Dame, quod Melibeus, doth youre will and youre liking, for I putte me wholly in youre disposition and ordinance.

Than Dame Prudence, whan she sey the good will of hire husbond, delibered unto hire, and toke avis in hire self, thinking how she might bring this nede unto goode ende; and whan she sey hire time she sent for thise adversaries to come unto hire in to a privee place, and shewed wisely unto hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, and the grete harmes and perils that ben in werre; and saide to hem in a goodly manere how that hem oughte have gret repentance of the injuries and wronges that they hadden don to Melibeus hire lord, and unto hire and to hire doughter.

And whan they herden the goodly wordes of Dame Prudence they weren so surpised and ravished, and hadden so gret joye of hire, that wonder was to telle. A Lady! quod they, ye have shewed unto us the blessing of sweteneesse, after the saying of David the prophet; for the reconciling which we be not worthy to have in no manere, but we oughten requeren it with grete contrition and humilitee, ye of your grete goodnesse have presented unto us. Now see we wel that the science and conning of Salomon is ful trewe; for he saith, that swete wordes multiplien and encresen frendes, and maken shrewes to be debonaire and meke.

Certes, quod they, we putten oure dede and all our matere and cause al holly in youre good will, and ben redy to obeye unto the speche and commaundement of my Lord Melibeus; and therfore, dere and benigne Lady! we praye you and beseche you, as mekely as we conne and moun, that it like unto your grete goodnesse to fulfille in dede youre goodly wordes; for we consideren and knowelechen that we han offended and greved my Lord Melibeus out of mesure, so fer forth that we ben not of power to maken him amendes, and therfore we oblige and binde us and oure frendes for to do all his will and his commaundements; but peraventure he hath swiche hevinesse and swiche wrath to us ward, because of our offence, that he wol enjoynen us swiche a peine as we moun not bere ne susteine; and therfore, noble Ladie! we beseche youre womanlyte pittee to take swiche a visement in this nede that we ne oure frendes ben not disherited and destroied thurgh oure folie.

Certes, quod Prudence, it is an hard thing and right perilous that a man putte him all outrely in the arbitration and jugement and in the might and power of his enemie; for Salomon sayth, Leveth me and yeveth credence to that that I shall say; To thy sone, to thy wif, to thy frend, ne to thy brother, ne yeve thou never might ne maistrie over thy body while thou livest. Now sith he defendeth that a man shulde not yeve to his brother ne to his frend the might of his body, by a strenger reson he defendeth and forbedeth a man to yeve himself to his enemy. And natheles I conseille you that ye mistruste not my lord, for I wot wel and know verraily that he is debonaire and meke, large, curteis and nothing desirous ne coveitous of good ne richesse, for ther is nothing in this world that he desireth save only worshipe and honour. Forthermore, I know wel and am right sure that he shal nothing do in this nedie withouten my conseil, and I shal so werken in this cas that by the grace of our Lord God ye shuln be reconciled unto us.

Than saiden they with o vois, Worshipful Lady! we putten us and our goodes al fully in youre will and disposition, and ben redy to come what day that it like unto youre noblesse to limite us or assigne us for to make oure obligation and bond as strong as it liketh unto youre goodnesse, that we moun fulfille the will of you and of my Lord Melibee.

Whan Dame Prudence had herd the answer of thise men, she bad hem go agein prively, and she retourned to hire Lord Melibee, and told him how she found his adversaries ful repentant knowleching ful lowly hir sinnes and trespas, and how they weren redy to suffren all peine, requering and preying him of mercy and pitee.

Than saide Melibee, He is wel worthy to have pardon and foryeveneesse of his sinne that excuseth not his sinne, but knowlecheth and repenteth him, axing indulgence; for Senek saith, Ther is the remission and furyeveneesse wher as the confession is, for confession is neighebour to innocence: and therefore I assente and conferme me to have pees: but it is good that we do nought withouten the assent and will of oure frendes.

Than was Prudence right glad and joyeful, and saide, Certes, Sire, ye han wel and goodly answered; for right as by the conseil, assent, and helpe, of your frendes ye han be stired to venge you and make werre, right so withouten hir conseil shul ye not accord you ne have pees with youre adversaries; for the lawe saith, Ther is nothing so good by way of kinde as a thing to be unbounde by him that it was ybounde.

And than Dame Prudence, withouten delay or tarying, sent anon hire messageres for hir kin and for hir olde frendes which that were trewe and wise, and told hem by ordre in the presence of Meli-

hee all the matere as it is above expreſſed and declared, and preied hem that they wold yeve hir avis and conſeil what were beſt to do in this nede. And whan Melibeus frendes hadden taken hir avis and deliberation of the foreſaid matere, and hadden examined it by gret beſineſſe and gret diligence, they yaven ful conſeil for to have pees and reſte, and that Melibee ſhulde receive with good herte his adverſaries to foryeveneſſe and mercy.

And whan Dame Prudence had herd the aſſent of hire Lord Melibee, and the conſeil of his frendes accord with hire will and hire entention, ſhe was wonder glad in hire herte, and ſayde, Ther is an old proverbe, quod ſhe, ſayth, that the goodneſſe that thou maiſt do this day do it, and abide not ne delay it not till to morwe: and therefore I conſeille that ye ſende youre meſſageres, ſwiche as ben diſcret and wiſe, unto youre adverſaries, telling hem on youre behalf, that if they wol trete of pees and of accord, that they ſhape hem withouten delay or tarying to come unto us. Which thing parfourmed was indede. And whan thiſe treſpaſours and repenting folk of hir folies, that is to ſayn, the adverſaries of Melibee, hadden herd what thiſe meſſageres ſayden unto hem they weren right glade and joyeful, and anſwerden ful mekely and benignely, yelding graces and thankinges to hir Lord Melibee and to all his compagnie, and ſhopen hem withouten delay to go with the meſſageres, and obeye to the commandement of hir Lord Melibee.

And right anon they token hir way to the court of Melibee, an' token with hem ſom of hir trewe frendes to make feith for hem and for to ben hir borwes. And whan they were comen to the preſence of Melibee he ſaide hem thiſe wordes. It ſtant thus quod Melibee, and ſoth it is that ye cauſeles and withouten ſkill and reſon han don grete injuries and wronges to me and to my wif Prudence, and to my doughter alſo, for ye han entered into myn hous by violence, and have don ſwiche outrage that alle men knowen wel that ye han deſerved the deth; and therefore wol I know and wete of you whether ye wol put the puniſhing and chaſtiſing, and the vengence, of this outrage in the will of me and of my wif, or ye wol not.

Than the wiſeſt of hem three anſwered for hem alle, and ſaide; Sire, quod he, we knowen wel that we ben unworthy to come to the court of ſo gret a lord and ſo worthy as ye ben, for we han ſo gretly miſtaken us, and han offended and agilte in ſwiche wiſe agein your high lordſhipe, that trewely we han deſerved the deth; but yet for the grete goodneſſe and dobonairetee that all the world witneſſeth of youre perſone we ſubmitten us to the excellence and benignitee of youre gracious lordſhipe, and ben redy to obeye to alle youre comandements, beſeching you that of youre merciable pitee ye wol conſidere oure grete repentance and lowe ſubmiſſion, and graunte us foryeveneſſe of our outragious treſpas and offence; for wel we knowen that youre hberal grace and mercie ſtretchen hem forther into goodneſſe than don oure outragious giltes and treſpas into wickedneſſe, al be it that curſedly and dampnably we han agilte again youre highe lordſhipe.

Then Melibee toke hem up fro the ground ful benignely, and received hir obligations and hir bondes by hir othes upon hir plegges and borwes, and aſſigned hem a certain day to retourne unto his court for to receive and accept ſentence and jugement that Melibee wolde commande to be don on hem by the cauſes aforeſaid; which thinges ordeined every man retourned to his hous.

And whan that Dame Prudence ſaw hire time ſhe freined, and axed hire Lord Melibee what vengance he thoughte to taken of his adverſaries?

To which Melibee anſwerd and ſaide; Certes, quod he, I think and purpoſe me fully to diſherite hem of all that ever they han, and for to putte hem in exile for ever.

Certes, quod Dame Prudence, this were a cruel ſentence, and muchel agein reſon, for ye ben riche ynough, and han no nede of other mennes good; and ye might lightly in this wiſe gete you a coveitous name, which is a vicious thing, and oughte to be eſchewed of every good man, for after the ſawe of the apoſtle, coveitiſe is rote of alle harmes; and therefore it were better for you to leſe muchel good of your owen, than for to take of hir good in this manere: for better it is to leſe good with worſhip than to winne good with vilanie and ſhame: and every man ought to do his diligence and his beſineſſe to get him a good name; and yet ſhal he not only beſie him in keeping his good name, but he ſhal alſo enforcen him alway to do ſom thing by which he may renovelle his good name; for it is written that the olde good los or good name of a man is ſone gon and paſſed whan it is not newed. And as touching that ye ſayn, that ye wol exile your adverſaries, that thinketh me muchel agein reſon and out of meſure, conſidered the power that they han yeven you upon hemſelf; and it is written, that he is worthy to leſe his privilege that miſuſeth the might and the power that is yeven him. And I ſette cas ye might enjoine hem that peine by right and by lawe, (which I trowe ye mowe not do) I ſay ye might not putte it to execution peraventure, and than it were like to retourne to the werre as it was beforn: and therefore if you wol that men do you obeiſance ye muſt deme more curteiſly, that is to ſayn, ye muſt yeve more eſie ſentences and jugements; for it is written, he that moſt curteiſly commandeth to him men moſt obeyen. And therefore I pray you that in this neceſſitee and in this nede ye caſte you to overcome your herte; for Senek ſayth, that he that overcometh his herte overcometh twies; and Tullius ſaith, Ther is nothing ſo commendable in a gret lord as whan he is debonaire and meke, and appeſeth him lightly. And I pray you that ye wol now forbere to do vengeaunce in ſwiche a manere that your good name may be kept and conſerved, and that men mown have cauſe and matere to preiſe you of pitee and of mercy, and that ye

have no cauſe to repente you of thing that ye don; for Seneke ſaieth, He overcometh in an evil manere that repenteth of his victorie. Wherfore I pray you let mercy be in your herte, to the effect and entent that God Almighty have mercy upon you in his laſt jugement; for Seint James ſaith in his epiſtle, Jugement withoute mercy ſhal be do to him that hath no mercy of another wight.

Whan Melibee had herd the grete ſkilles and reſons of Dame Prudence, and hire wiſe informations and techinges, his herte gan encline to the will of his wif, conſidering hire trewe entente, enforced him anon, and aſſented fully to werken after hire conſeil, and thanked God, of whom procedeth all goodneſſe and all vertue, that him ſent a wif of ſo gret diſcretion. And whan the day came that his adverſaries ſhulde appere in his preſence, he ſpake to hem ful goodly, and ſaide in this wiſe: Al be it ſo that of youre pride and high preſumption and folie, and of youre negligence and unconning, ye have miſborne you and treſpaſed unto me, yet for as muchel as I ſee and behold your grete humilitee, and that ye ben ſory and repentant of youre giltes, it conſtreineth me to do you grace and mercy; wherfor I receive you into my grâce, and foryeve you outrely alle the offences, injuries, and wronges, that yet have don agein me and mine, to this effect and to this ende, that God of his endeles mercie wol at the time of oure dying foryeve us oure giltes that we han treſpaſed to him in this wretched world; for douteles if we be ſory and repentant of the ſinnes and giltes which we han treſpaſed in the ſight of oure Lord God, he is ſo free and ſo merciable, that he wol foryeven us oure giltes, and bringen us to the bliſſe that never hath ende. *Amen.*

THE MONKES PROLOGUE.

Whan ended was the Tale of Melibee
And of Prudence and hire benignitee
Our Hoſte ſaide, As I am faithful man,
And by the precious *corpus Madrian*,
I hadde lever than a barell of ale
That goode leſe my wif had herde this Tale,
For ſhe n'is no thing of ſwiche patience
As was this Melibeus wif Prudence.
By Goddes bones whan I bete my knaves
She brineth me the grete clobbed ſtaves,
And cryeth, Slee the dogges everich on,
And breke hem bothe bak and every bon.
And if that any neighebour of mine
Wol not in chirche to my wif encline,
Or be ſo hardy to hire to treſpace,
Whan ſhe cometh home ſhe rampeth in my face,
And cryeth, Falſe coward! wreke thy wif:
By *corpus Domini* I wol have thy knif,
And thou ſhalt have my diſtaf and go ſpinne.
Fro day til night right thus ſhe wol beginne.
Alas! ſhe ſaith, that ever I was yſhape
To wed a milkſop or a coward ape,
That wol ben overladde with every wight:
Thou darſt not ſtonden by the wives right.
This is my lif but if that I wol fight,
And out at dore anon I mote me dight,
Or elles I am loſt, but if that I
Be like a wilde lion fool-hardy.
I wote wel ſhe wol do me ſlee ſom day
Som neighebour, and thanne go my way,
For I am in perilous with knif in honde
Al be it that I dare not hire withſtonde,
For ſhe is bigge in armes by my faith,
That ſhal he finde that hire miſdoth or ſaith.
But let us paſſe away fro this matere.
My Lord the Monk, quod he, be mery of chere
For ye ſhul telle a Tale trewely
Lo! Roucheſter ſtondeth here faſte by;
Ride forth, min owen Lord, breke not our game.
But by my trouthe I can no telle youre name;
Whether ſhal I call you my Lord Dan John.
Or Dan Thomas, or elles Dan Albon?
Of what hous be ye by your fader kin?
I vow to God thou haſt a ful faire ſkin.
It is a gentil paſture ther thou goſt;
Thou art not like a penaunt or a goſt.
Upon my faith thou art ſom officer,
Som worthy ſextein, or ſom celerer,
For by my fadres ſoule, as to my dome,
Thou art a maiſter whan thou art home;
No poure cloiſterer, ne non novice,
But a governour bothe ware and wiſe,
And therwithal of braunes and of bones
A right wel faring perſone for the nones.
I pray to God yeve him confuſion
That firſt thee brought into religion.
Thou woldeſt han ben a trede-foul a right
Haddeſt thou as grete leve as thou haſt might
To parfourme all thy luſt: in engendrure
Thou haddeſt begeten many a creature.
Alas! why wereſt thou ſo wide a cope?
God yeve me ſorwe but and I were pope
Not only thou but every mighty man,
Though he were ſhore ful high upon his pan,
Shuld have a wif, for al this world is lorn,
Religion hath take up all the corn
Of treding, and we borel men ben ſhrimpes;
Of feble trees ther comen wretched impes.
This maketh that our heires ben ſo ſclendre
And feble that they monn not wel engendre;
This maketh that our wives wol aſſaye
Religious folk, for they moun better paye
Of Venus payements than mowen we;
God wote no Luſheburgees payen ye.
But be not wroth, my Lord, though that I play;
Ful oft in game a ſothe have I herd ſay.
This worthy Monke toke all in patience,
And ſaide, I wol don all my diligence,
As fer as ſouneth into honeſtee,
To tellen you a Tale, or two or three;
And if you liſt to herken hiderward
I wol you ſayn the lif of Seint Edward,
Or elles tragedies firſt I wol telle,
Of which I have an hundred in my celle.
Tragedie is to ſayn a certain ſtorie,
As olde bookes maken us memorie,
Of him that ſtood in gret proſperitee,
And is yfallen out of high degree
In to miſerie, and endeth wretchedly;
And they ben verſified communly
Of ſix feet, which men clepen Exametron:
In proſe eke ben endited many on,
And eke in metre in many a ſondry wiſe.
Lo this declaring ought ynough ſuffice.
Now herkeneth if you liketh for to here.
But firſt I you beſeche in this matere,

Though I by ordre telle not thiſe thinges,
Be it of popes, emperoures, or kinges,
After hir ages, as men written finde,
But telle hem ſom before and ſom behinde,
As it now cometh to my remembrance,
Have me excuſed of min ignorance.

THE MONKES TALE*.

I wol bewaile in manere of tragedie
The harm of hem that ſtode in high degree,
And fellen ſo that ther n'as no remedie
To bring hem out of hir adverſitee;
For certain whan that Fortune lift to flee
Ther may no man of hire the cours withholde:
Let no man truſt on blinde proſperitee;
Beth ware by thiſe enſamples trewe and olde.

Lucifer.

At Lucifer, though he an angel were
And not a man, at him I wol beginne;
For though Fortune may non angel dere,
From high degree yet felle he for his ſinne
Doun into helle, wheras he yet is inne.
O Lucifer! brighteſt of angels alle,
Now art thou Sathanas, that maiſt not twinne
Out of miſerie in which that thou art falle.

Adam.

Lo! Adam in the feld of Damaſcene
With Goddes owen finger wrought was he,
And not begeten of mannes ſperme unclene,
And welre all Paradis ſaving o tree.
Had never worldly man ſo high degree
As Adam, til he for miſgovernance
Was driven out of his proſperitee
To labour, and to helle, and to meſchance.

Sampſon.

Lo! Sampſon, which that was annunciat
By the angel long or his nativitee,
And was to God Almighty conſecrat,
And ſtode in nobleſſe while he mighte ſee:
Was never ſwiche another as was he,
To ſpeke of ſtrength and therto hardineſſe;
But to his wives tolde he his ſecree,
Thurgh which he ſlow himſelf for wretchedneſſe.

Sampſon, this noble and mighty champion,
Withouten wepen ſave his handes twey
He ſlow and all to-rente the leon,
Toward his wedding walking by the wey.
His falſe wif coude him ſo pleſe and pray
Til ſhe his conſeil knewe, and ſhe untrewe
Unto his foos his conſeil gan bewray,
And him forſoke, and toke another newe.
Three hundred foxes toke Sampſon for ire,
And all hir tayles he togeder bond,
And ſet the foxes tayles all on fire,
For he in every tayl had knit a brond,
And they brent all the cornes in that lond,
And all hir oliveres and vines eke.
A thouſand men he ſlow eke with his hond,
And had no wepen but an aſſes cheke.
Whan they were ſlain ſo thurſted him that he
Was wel nie lorne, for which he gan to preye
That God wold on his peine han ſom pitee,
And ſend him drinke, or elles moſte he deye;
And of this aſſes cheke that was ſo dreye
Out of a wang toth ſprang anon a welle,
Of which he drank ynough, ſhortly to ſeye.
Thus halp him God, as *Judicum* can telle.
By veray force at Gaſa on a night,
Maugre the Philiſtins of that citee,
The gates of the toun he hath up plight,
And on his bak ycarried hem hath he
High on an hill, wher as men might hem ſe.
O noble mighty Sampſon, leſe and dere!
Haddeſt thou not told to women thy ſecree,
In all this world ne had ther ben thy pere.
This Sampſon never ſider dranke ne wine,
Ne on his hed came raſour non ne ſhere.
By precept of the meſſager divine,
For all his ſtrengthes in his heres were;
And fully twenty winter yere by yere
He hadde of Iſrael the governance;
But ſone ſhal he wepen many a tere,
For women ſhuln him bringen to meſchance.

* A tragical diſcourſe of many who have fallen from high eſtate into extreme miſery. *Urry.*

Unto his lemman Dalida he told
That in his heres all his ſtrengthe lay,
And falſely to his fomen ſhe him ſold;
And ſleping in hire barme upon a day
She made to clip or ſhere his here away,
And made his fomen al his craft eſpien;
And whan that they him fond in this array
They bond him faſt, and putten out his eyen.

But or his here was clipped or yſhave,
Ther was no bond with which men might him bind,
But now is he in priſon in a cave,
Wheras they made him at the querne grinde.
O noble Sampſon, ſtrongeſt of mankind,
O whilom juge in glory and richeſſe!
Now mayeſt thou wepen with thin eyen blind
Sith thou fro wele art falle in wretchedneſſe.

The ende of this caitif was as I ſhal ſeye:
His fomen made a feſte upon a day,
And made him as hir fool before hem pleye,
And this was in a temple of gret array:
But at the laſt he made a foule affray,
For he two pillers ſhoke and made hem falle,
And doun fell temple and all, and ther it lay,
And ſlow himſelf, and eke his fomen alle.

This is to ſayn, the princes everich on,
And eke three thouſand bodies, were ther ſlain
With falling of the gret temple of ſton
Of Sampſon now wol I no more ſain:
Beth ware by this enſample old and plain
That no men tell hir conſeil to hir wives
Of ſwiche thing as they wold han ſecree fain,
If that it touch hir limmes or hir lives.

Hercules.

Of Hercules the ſoveraine conqueroun
Singen his werkes laude, and high renoun,
For in his time of ſtrength he was the flour.
He ſlow and raft the ſkinne of the leon;
He of Centaures laid the boſt adoun;
He Harpies ſlow, the cruel briddes felle;
He golden apples raft fro the dragon;
He drow out Cerberos, the hound of helle.

He ſlow the cruel tirant Buſirus,
And made his hors to fret him fleſh and bon;
He ſlow the firy ſerpent venemous;
Of Achelous two hornes brake he on;
And he ſlow Cacus in a cave of ſton;
He ſlow the geaunt Anteus the ſtrong;
He ſlow the griſely bore, and that anon;
And bare the hevene on his nekke long

Was never wight ſith that the world began
That ſlow ſo many monſtres as did he;
Thurghout the wide world his name ran,
What for his ſtrength and for his high bountee;
And every reaame went he for to ſee.
He was ſo ſtrong that no man might him let;
At bothe the worldes endes, ſaith Trophee,
In ſtede of boundes he a piller ſet.

A lemman had this noble champion
That highte Deianire, as freſh as May:
And, as thiſe clerkes maken mention,
She hath him ſent a ſherte freſh and gay:
Alas! this ſherte, alas and wala wa!
Envenimed was ſotilly withalle,
That or that he had wered it half a day
It made his fleſh all from his bones falle.

But natheles ſom clerkes hire excuſen
By on that highte Neſſus, that it maked:
Be as may be, I wol hire not accuſen;
But on his bak this ſherte he wered al naked,
Til that his fleſh was for the venim blaked;
And whan he ſaw non other remedie
In hote coles he hath himſelven raked,
For with no venime deigned him to die.

Thus ſtarf this worthy mighty Hercules.
Lo! who may truſt on Fortune any throw?
For him that folweth all this world of pres
Or he be ware is oft ylaid ful lowe:
Ful wiſe is he that can himſelven knowe.
Beth ware, for whan that Fortune liſt to gloſe
Than waiteth ſhe hire man to overthrowe
By ſwiche a way as he wold leſt ſuppoſe.

Nabuchodonoſor.

The mighty trone, the precious treſor,
The glorious ſceptre, and real majeſtee,
That hadde the King Nabuchodonoſor,
With tonge unnethes may deſcrived be:
He twies wan Jeruſalem the citee,
The veſſell of the temple he with him ladde;
At Babiloine was his ſoveraine ſee,
In which his glorie and his delit he hadde.

The fayreſt children of the blood real
Of Iſrael he did do gelde anon,
And maked eche of hem to ben his thral.
Amonges other Daniel was on,
That was the wiſeſt child of everich on,
For he the dremes of the king expouned,
Wher as in Caldee clerk ne was ther non
That wiſte to what ſin his dremes ſouned.

This proude king let make a ſtatue of gold
Sixty cubites long and ſeven in brede,
To which image both yonge and old
Commanded he to loute and have in drede,
Or in a fourneis ful of flames rede
He ſhuld be brent that wolde not obeye;
But never wold aſſenten to that dede,
Daniel, ne his yonge felawes tweye.

This king of kinges proud was and elat;
He wend that God that ſit in majeſtee
Ne might him nat bereve of his eſtat:
But ſodenly he loſt his dignitee,
And like a beſt him ſemed for to be,
And ete heye as an oxe, and lay therout:
In rain with wilde beſtes walked he
Til certain time was ycome about.

And like an egles fethers wex his heres,
His neyles like a briddes clawes were,
Til God releſed him at certain yeres,
And yaf him wit, and than with many a tere
He thanked God, and ever his lif in fere
Was he to don amis, or more treſpace:
And til that time he laid was on his bere
He knew that God was ful of might and grace,

Balthasar.

His sone, which that highte Balthàsar,
That held the regne after his fadres day,
He by his fader coulde not beware,
For proude he was of herte and of array,
And eke an ydolaster was he ay.
His high estat assured him in pride;
But Fortune cast him doun (and ther he lay)
And sodenly his regne gan devide.
A feste he made unto his lordes alle
Upon a time, and made hem blithe be,
And than his officers gan he calle;
Goth bringeth forthe the vessels, quod he,
Which that my fader in his prosperitee
Out of the temple of Jerusalem beraft,
And to our highe goddes thanke we
Of honour, that our eldres with us laft.
His wif, his lordes, and his concubines,
Ay dronken, while hir appetites last,
Out of thise noble vessels sondry wines.
And on a wall this king his eyen cast,
And saw an hand armles that wrote ful fast,
For fere of which he quoke and siked sore:
This hand that Balthasar so sore agast,
Wrote, *Mane tecbel Phares* and no more.
In al that lond magicien was non
That coud expounen what this lettre ment,
But Daniel expouned it anon,
And said, O King! God to thy fader lent
Glorie and honour, regne, tresour and rent,
And he was proud and nothing God ne dradde,
And therfore God gret wreche upon him sent,
And him beraft the regne that he hadde.
He was out cast of mannes compagnie.
With asses was his habitation,
And ete hey as a best in wete and drie,
Til that he knew by grace and by reson
That God of heven hath domination
Over every regne and every creature,
And than had God of him compassion,
And him restored his regne and his figure.
Eke thou that art his sone art proud also
And knowest all thise thinges verily,
And art rebel to God and art his so:
Thou dranke eke of his vessels boldely,
Thy wif eke and thy wenches sinfully
Dranke of the same vessels sondry wines,
And heried false goddes cursedly,
Therfore to thee yshapen ful gret pine is.
This hand was sent fro God that on the wall
Wrote *Mane tecbel Phares*, trusteth me.
Thy regne is don; thou wayest nought at all:
Divided is thy regne, and it shal be
To Medes and to Perses yeven, quod he.
And thilke same night this king was slawe,
An Darius occupied his degree,
Though he therto had neither right ne lawe.
Lordinges, ensample hereby moun ye take
How that in lordship is no sikernesse,
For whan that Fortune wol a man forsake
She bereth away his regne and his richesse,
And eke his frendes, bothe more and lesse;
For what man that hath frendes thurgh Fortune
Mishap wol make hem enemies I gesse.
This proverbe is ful soth, and sule commune.

Zenobia.

Zenobia, of Palmerie the quene,
(As writen Persiens of hire nobilesse)
So worthy was in armes, and so kene,
That no wight passed hire in hardinesse,
Ne in linege, ne in other gentillesse.
Of kinges blood of Perse is she descended;
I say not that she hadde most faireneſſe,
But of hire shape she might not ben amended.
From hire childhode I finde that she sledde
Office of woman, and to wode she went,
And many a wilde hartes blood she shedde
With arwes brode that she to hem sent;
She was so swift that she anon hem hent:
And whan that she was elder she wolde kille
Leons, lepard, and beres al to-rent,
And in hire armes weld hem at hire wille.
She dorst the wilde bestes dennes seke,
And rennen in the mountaignes all the night,
And slepe under the bush; and she coude eke
Wrastlen by veray force and veray might
With any yong man, were he never so wight;
Ther mighte nothing in hire armes stonde:
She kept hire maidenhode from every wight;
To no man deigned hire for to be bonde.
But at the last hire frendes han hire maried
To Odenat, a prince of that contree,
Al were it so that she hem longe taried,
And ye shul understonden how that he
Hadde swiche fantasies as hadde she;
But natheles whan they were knit in fere
They lived in joye and in felicitee,
For eche of hem had other lese and dere;
Save o thing, that she n'olde never assente
By no way that he shulde by hire lie
But ones, for it was hire plaine entente
To have a childe the world to multiplie;
And al so sone as that she might espie
That she was not with childe with that dede,
Than wold she suffer him don his fantasie
Eftsone, and not but ones out of drede.
And if she were with child at thilke cast
No more shuld he playen thilke game
Till fullen fourty days weren past,
Than wold she ones suffre him do the same.
Al were this Odenate wild or tame
He gate no more of hire, for thus she sayde,
It was to wives lecherie and shame
In other cas if that men with hem playde.
Two sones by this Odenate had she,
The which she kept in vertue and lettrure.
But now unto our Tale turne we.
I say so worshipful a creature,
And wise therwith, and large with mesure,
So penible in the werre, and curteis eke,
Ne more labour might in werre endure,
Was non, though all this world men shulden seke.
Hire riche array ne mighte not be told,
As wel in vessell as in hire clothing;
She was all clad in pierrie and in gold;
And eke she lefte not for non hunting

To have of fondry tonges ful knowing,
Whan that ſhe leiſer had; and for to entend
To lernen bookes was all hire liking,
How ſhe in vertue might hire lif deſpend.
And ſhortly of this ſtorie for to trete,
So doughty was hire huſbond, and eke ſhe,
That they conquered many regnes grete
In the orient, with many a faire citee
Appertenaunt unto the majeſtee
Of Rome, and with ſtrong hand held hem ful faſt,
Ne never might hir fomen don hem flee
Ay while that Odenates dayes laſt.
Hire batailles, who ſo liſt hem for to rede,
Againe Sapor the king, and other mo,
And how that all this proceſſe fell in dede,
Why ſhe conquered, and what title therto,
And after of hire miſchefe and hire wo,
How that ſhe was beſeged and ytake,
Let him unto my maiſter Petrark go,
That writeth ynough of this I undertake.
Whan Odenate was ded ſhe mightily
The regnes held, and with hire propre hond
Againe hir foos ſhe fought ſo cruelly
That ther n'as king ne prince in all that lond
That he n'as glad if he that grace fond
That ſhe ne wolde upon his lond werreye;
With hire they maden alliaunce by bond
To ben in pees and let hire ride and pleye.
The Emperour of Rome Claudius,
Ne him beforn the Romain Galien,
Ne dorſte never be ſo corageous,
Ne non Ermin ne non Egiptien,
Ne Surrien ne non Arabien,
Within the feld ne dorſte with hire fight,
Leſt that ſhe wold hem with hire hondes ſlen,
Or with hire meinie putten hem to flight.
In kinges habite wente hire ſones two
As heires of hir fadres regnes alle,
And Heremanno and Timolao
Hir names were, as Perſiens hem calle.
But ay Fortune hath in hire hony galle:
This mighty quene may no while endure;
Fortune out of hire regne made hire falle
To wretchedneſſe and to miſaventure.
Aurelian, whan that the governance
Of Rome came into his hondes twey,
He ſhope upon this quene to do vengeance,
And with his legions he toke his way
Toward Zenobie; and, ſhortly for to ſay,
He made hire flee, and atte laſt hire hent,
And fettred hire and eke hire children tway,
And wan the lond, and home to Rome he went.
Amonges other thinges that he wan
Hire char, that was with gold wrought and pierrie,
This grete Romain, this Aurelian,
Hath with him lad for that men ſhuld it ſee.
Beforen his triumphe walketh ſhe,
With gilte chaines on hire necke honging,
Crouned ſhe was, as after hire degree,
And ful of pierrie charged hire clothing.
Alas, Fortune! ſhe that whilom was
Dredeful to kinges and to emperoures,
Now gaureth all the peple on hire, alas!
And ſhe that helmed was in ſtarke ſtoures,
And wan by force tounes ſtronge and toures,
Shal on hire hed now were a vitremite,
And ſhe that bare the ſceptre ful of floures
Shal bere a diſtaf, hire coſt for to quite.

Nero.

Although that Nero were as vicious
As any fend that lieth ful low adoun,
Yet he, as telleth us Suetonius,
This wide world had in ſubjectioun,
Both eſt and weſt, ſouth and ſeptentrioun.
Of rubies, ſaphires, and of perles white,
Were al his clothes brouded up and doun,
For he in gemmes gretly gan delite.
More delicat, more pompous of array,
More proude, was never emperour than he,
That ilke cloth that he had wered o day
After that time he n'olde it never ſee:
Nettes of gold threde had he gret plentee
To fiſh in Tiber whan him liſt to play:
His luſtes were as law in his degree,
For Fortune as his frend wold him obay.
He Rome brente for his delicacie;
The Senatours he flow upon a day
To heren how that men wold wepe and crie,
And flow his brother, and by his ſuſter lay.
His moder made he in pitous array,
For he hire wombe let ſlitten, to behold
Wher he conceived was, ſo wala wa!
That he ſo litel of his moder told.
No tere out of his eyen for that ſight
Ne came, but ſayd a faire woman was ſhe.
Gret wonder is how that he coud or might
Be domeſman of hire dede beautee.
The wine to bringen him commanded he,
And dranke anon: no other wo he made.
Whan might is joined unto crueltee,
Alas! to depe wol the venime wade.
In youthe a maiſter had this emperour
To techen him lettrure and curteſie:
For of moralitee he was the flour,
As in his time, but if bookes lie;
And while this maiſter had of him maiſtrie
He maked him ſo conning and ſo ſouple
That longe time it was or tyrannie
Or any vice dorſt in him uncouple.
This Seneka, of which that I deviſe,
Becauſe Nero had of him ſwiche drede,
For he fro vices wold him ay chaſtiſe
Diſcretly, as by word and not by dede;
Sire, he wold ſay, an emperour mote nede
Be vertuous, and haten tyrannie;
For which he made him in a bathe to blede
On bothe his armes till he muſt die.
This Nero had eke of a cuſtumaunce
In youth againe his maiſter for to riſe,
Which afterward him thought a gret grevaunce,
Therfore he made him dien in this wiſe.
But nathieles this Seneka the wiſe
Chees in a bathe to die in this manere
Rather than han another turmentiſe:
And thus hath Nero ſlain his maiſter dere.

Now fell it ſo that Fortune liſt no lenger
The highe pride of Nero to cherice,
For though that he were ſtrong yet was ſhe ſtreng-
She thoughte thus: by God I am to nice [er.
To ſet a man that is fulfilled of vice
In high degree, and Emperour him calle:
By God out of his ſete I wol him trice;
Whan he leſt weneth ſoneſt ſhal he falle.

The peple roſe upon him on a night
For his defaute, and whan he it eſpied
Out of his dores anon he hath him dight
Alone, and ther he wend han had ben allied
He knocked faſt, and ay the more he cried
The faſter ſhetten they hir dores alle;
Tho wiſt he wel he had himſelf miſgied,
And went his way; no lenger dorſt he calle.

The peple cried and rombled up and doun,
That with his eres herd he how they ſayde,
Wher is this falſe tyrant, this Neroun?
For fere almoſt out of his wit he brayde,
And to his goddes pitouſly he preide
For ſocour, but it mighte not betide:
For drede of this him thoughte that he deide,
And ran into a gardin him to hide.

And in this gardin fond he cherles tweye
That ſaten by a fire gret and red,
And to thiſe cherles two he gan to preye
To ſlen him, and to girden of his hed,
That to his body whan that he were ded
Were no deſpit ydon for his defame.
Himſelf he ſlow, he coud no better rede,
Of which Fortune lough and hadde a game.

Holofernes.

Was never capitaine under a king
That regnes mo put in ſubjectioun,
Ne ſtrenger was in feld of alle thing
As in his time, ne greter of renoun,
Ne more pompous in high preſumptioun,
Than Holoferne, which that Fortune ay kiſt
So likerouſly, and lad him up and doun,
Til that his hed was of or that he wiſt.

Not only that this world had him in awe
For leſing of richeſſe and libertee,
But he made every man reneie his lawe.
Nabuchodonoſor was God, ſayd he;
Non other god ne ſhulde honoured be.
Ageins his heſte ther dare no wight treſpace
Save in Bethulia, a ſtrong citee,
Wher Eliachim a preeſt was of that place.

But take kepe of the deth of Holoferne:
Amid his hoſt he dronken lay a night
Within his tente, large as is a berne;
And yet for all his pompe and all his might
Judith, a woman, as he lay upright
Sleping, his hed of ſmote, and fro his tente
Ful privelý ſhe ſtale from every wight,
And with his hed unto hire toun ſhe wente.

Antiochus.

What nedeth it of King Antiochus
To tell his high and real majeſtee,
His gret pride, and his werkes venimous?
For ſwiche another was ther non as he:
Redeth what that he was in Machabe,
And redeth the proud wordes that he ſeid,
And why he fell from his proſperitee,
And in an hill how wretchedly he deid.

Fortune him had enhaunſed ſo in pride
That verailý he wend he might attaine
Unto the ſterres upon every ſide,
And in a balaunce weyen eche mountaine,
And all the floodes of the ſee reſtreine:
And Goddes peple had he moſt in hate,
Hem wold he ſleen in turment and in peine,
Wening that God ne might his pride abate.

And for that Nichanor and Timothee
With Jewes were venquiſhed mightily,
Unto the Jewes ſwiche an hate had he
That he bad greithe his char ful haſtily,
And ſwore and ſayde ful deſpitouſly
Unto Jeruſalem he wold eftſone,
To wreke his ire on it ful cruelly;
But of his purpos was he let ful ſone.

God for his manace him ſo ſore ſmote
With inviſible wound, ay incurable,
That in his guttes carſe it ſo and bote
Thatte his peines weren importable;
And certainly the wreche was reſonable,
For many a mannes guttes did he peine;
But from his purpos curſed and damnable,
For all his ſmerte, he n'olde him not reſtreine;

But bade anon apparailen his hoſt.
And ſodenly, or he was of it ware,
God daunted all his pride and all his boſt;
For he ſo ſore fell out of his chare
That it his limmes and his ſkinne to-tare,
So that he neither mighte go ne ride,
But in a chaiere men about him bare,
Alle forbruſed bothe bak and ſide.

The wreche of God him ſmote ſo cruelly
That thurgh his body wicked wormes crept,
And therwithal he ſtanke ſo horribly
That non of all his meinie that him kept,
Whether ſo that he woke or elles ſlept,
Ne mighte not of him the ſtinke endure.
In this miſchiefe he wailed and eke wept,
And knew God lord of every creature.

To all his hoſt and to himſelf alſo
Ful wlatſom was the ſtinke of his careine;
No man ne mighte him beren to ne fro;
And in this ſtinke and this horrible peine
He ſtarf ful wretchedly in a mountaine.
Thus hath this robbour and this homicide,
That many a man made to wepe and pleine,
Swiche guerdon as belongeth unto pride.

Alexander.

The ſtorie of Alexandre is ſo commune
That every wight that hath diſcretioun
Hath herd ſomwhat or all of his fortune.
This wide world, as in concluſioun,
He wan by ſtrength, or for his high renoun
They weren glad for pees unto him ſende.
The pride of man and boſt he layd adoun,
Wher ſo he came, unto the worldes ende.

Compariſon might never yet be maked
Betwix him and another conquerour,
For al this world for drede of him hath quaked;
He was of knighthode and of fredome flour;
Fortune him maked the heir of hire honour.
Save wine and women nothing might aſſwage
His high entente in armes and labour,
So was he ful of leonin corage.

What pris were it to him though I you told
Of Darius, and an hundred thouſand mo
Of kinges, princes, dukes, erles bold,
Which he conquered, and brought hem into wo?
I ſay as fer as man may ride or go
The world was his; what ſhuld I more deviſe?
For though I wrote or told you ever mo
Of his knighthode it mighte not ſuffice.

Twelf yere he regned, as ſaith Machabe;
Philippus ſone of Macedoine he was,
That firſt was king in Greece the contree.
O worthy gentil Alexandre! alas
That ever ſhuld thee fallen ſwiche a cas!
Enpoiſoned of thyn owen folke thou were;
Thy ſis Fortune hath turned into an as,
And yet for thee ne wept ſhe never a tere.

Who ſhal me yeven teres to complaine
The deth of gentilleſſe and of fraunchiſe,
That all this world welded in his demaine,
And yet him thought it mighte not ſuffice?
So ful was his corage of high empriſe.
Alas! who ſhal me helpen to endite
Falſe Fortune, and poiſon to deſpiſe?
The which two of all this wo I wite.

Julius Ceſar.

By wiſdome, manhode, and by gret labour,
From humblehede to real majeſtee
Up roſe he Julius the conquerour,
That wan all the occident by lond and ſee
By ſtrengthe of hond, or elles by tretee,
And unto Rome made hem tributarie,
And ſith of Rome the Emperour was he
Til that Fortune wexe his adverſarie.

O mighty Ceſar! that in Theſſalie
Ageins Pompeius, father thin in lawe,
That of the orient had all the chivalrie
As fer as that the day beginneth dawe,
Thou thurgh thy knighthode haſt hem take and ſlawe,
Save few folk that with Pompeius fledde,
Thurgh which thou put all the orient in awe,
Thanke Fortune that ſo wel thee ſpedde.

But now a litel while I wol bewaile
This Pompeius, this noble governour
Of Rome, which that fled at this bataille.
I ſay on of his men, a falſe traitour,
His hed of ſmote, to winnen him favour
Of Julius, and him the hed he brought:
Alas, Pompeie! of the orient conquerour,
That Fortune unto ſwiche a fin thee brought.

To Rome again repaireth Julius
With his triumphe laureat ful hie,
But on a time Brutus and Caſſius,
That ever had of his high eſtat envie,
Ful prively had made conſpiracie
Ageins this Julius in ſotil wiſe,
And caſt the place in which he ſhulde die
With bodekins, as I ſhal you deviſe.

This Julius to the Capitolie wente
Upon a day, as he was wont to gon,
And in the Capitolie anon him hente
This falſe Brutus and his other foon,
And ſtiked him with bodekins anon
With many a wound, and thus they let him lie;
But never gront he at no ſtroke but on,
Or elles at two, but if his ſtorie lie.

So manly was this Julius of herte,
And ſo wel loved eſtatly honeſtee,
That though his dedly woundes ſore ſmerte
His mantel over his hippes caſte he,
For no man ſhulde ſeen his privetee;
And as he lay of dying in a trance,
And wiſte verailly that ded was he,
Of honeſtee yet had he remembrance.

Lucan, to thee this ſtorie I recommende,
And to Sueton and Valerie alſo,
That of this ſtorie writen word and ende,
How that to thiſe gret conqueroures two
Fortune was firſt a frend and ſith a fo.
No man ne truſt upon hire favour long,
But have hire in await for evermo,
Witneſſe on all thiſe conqueroures ſtrong.

Creſus.

The riche Creſus, whilom King of Lide,
Of whiche Creſus Cirus fore him dradde,
Yet was he caught amiddes all his pride,
And to be brent men to the fire him ladde,
But ſwiche a rain doun from the welken ſhadde
That ſlow the fire, and made to him eſcape;
But to beware no grace yet he hadde
Til Fortune on the galwes made him gape.

Whan he eſcaped was he can not ſtint
For to beginne a newe werre again:
He wened wel for that Fortune him ſent
Swiche hap that he eſcaped thurgh the rain
That of his foos he mighte not be ſlain;
And eke a ſweven upon a night he mette
Of which he was ſo proud and eke ſo fain,
That in vengeance he all his herte ſette.

Upon a tree he was, as that him thought,
Ther Jupiter him weſhe both bak and ſide,
And Phebus eke a faire towail him brought
To drie him with, and therfore wex his pride,
And to his doughter that ſtood him beſide,
Which that he knew in high ſcience habound,
He bad hire tell him what it ſignified,
And ſhe his dreme began right thus expound.

The tree (quod ſhe) the galwes is to mene,
And Jupiter betokeneth ſnow and rain,
And Phebus with his towail clere and clene,
Tho ben the ſonnes ſtremes, ſoth to ſain:
Thou ſhalt anhanged be, fader, certain;
Rain ſhal thee waſh, and ſonne ſhal thee drie.
Thus warned him ful plat and eke ful plain
His doughter, which that called was Phanie.

Anhanged was Creſus the proude king;
His real trone might him not availle:
Tragedie is non other maner thing,
Ne can in ſinging crien ne bewaile,
But for that Fortune all day wol aſſaille
With unware ſtroke the regnes that ben proude;
For whan men truſten hire than wol ſhe faille,
And cover hire bright face with a cloude.

Peter of Spaine.

O noble, o worthy, Petro, glorie of Spaine!
Whom Fortune held ſo high in majeſtee,
Wel oughten men thy pitous deth complaine:
Out of thy lond thy brother made thee flee,
And after at a ſege by ſotiltee
Thou were betraied and lad unto his tent,
Wher as he with his owen hond ſlow thee,
Succeding in thy regne and in thy rent.

The feld of ſnow, with th' egle of blak therin,
Caught with the limerod, coloured as the glede,
He brewed this curſedneſſe and all this ſinne;
The wicked neſte was werker of this dede,
Not Charles Oliver, that toke ay hede
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorike
Genilon Oliver, corrupt for mede,
Broughte this worthy king in ſwiche a brike.

Petro King of Cypre.

O worthy Petro! King of Cypre alſo,
That Alexandrie wan by high maiſtrie,
Ful many an Hethen wroughteſt thou ful wo,
Of which thin owen lieges had envie,
And for nothing but for thy chivalrie
They in thy bed han ſlain thee by the morwe.
Thus can Fortune hire whele governie and gie,
And out of joye bringen men to ſorwe.

Barnabo Viſcount.

Of Milane grete Barnabo Viſcount,
God of delit, and ſcourge of Lumbardie,
Why ſhuld I not thin infortune account,
Sith in eſtat thou clomben were ſo high?
Thy brothers ſone, that was thy double allie,
For he thy nevew was and ſone in lawe,
Within his priſon made he thee to die,
But why ne how n'ot I that thou were ſlawe.

Hugelin of Piſe.

Of the Erl Hugelin of Piſe the langour
Ther may no tonge tellen for pitee.
But litel out of Piſe ſtant a tour,
In whiche tour in priſon yput was he,
And with him ben his litel children three,
The eldeſt ſcarſely five yere was of age:
Alas! Fortune, it was gret crueltee
Swiche briddes for to put in ſwiche a cage.

Dampned was he to die in that priſon,
For Roger which that Biſhop was of Piſe
Had on him made a falſe ſuggeſtion,
Thurgh which the peple gan upon him riſe,
And put him in a priſon in ſwiche a wiſe
As ye han herd; and mete and drinke he had
So ſmale, that wel unnethe it may ſuffiſe,
And therwithal it was ful poure and bad.

And on a day befell that in that houre
Whan that his mete wont was to be brought
The gailer ſhette the dores of the toure;
He herd it wel, but he ſpake right nought:
And in his herte anon ther fell a thought
That they for hunger wolden do him dien:
Alas! quod he, alas that I was wrought!
Therwith the teres fellen fro his eyen.

His yonge ſone, that three yere was of age,
Unto him ſaid, Fader, why do ye wepe?
Whan will the gailer bringen our potage?
Is ther no morſel bred that ye do kepe?
I am ſo hungry that I may not ſlepe.
Now wold God that I might ſlepen ever,
Than ſhuld not hunger in my wombe crepe;
Ther n'is no thing ſauf bred that me were lever.

Thus day by day this childe began to crie,
Til in his fadres barme adoun it lay,
And ſaide, Farewel, fader, I mote die;
And kiſt his fader, and dide the ſame day.
And whan the woful fader did it ſey
For wo his armes two he gan to bite,
And ſaide, Alas! Fortune, and wala wa!
Thy falſe whele my wo all may I wite.

His children wenden that for hunger it was
That he his armes gnowe, and not for wo,
And ſayden, Fader, do not ſo, alas!
But rather ete the fleſh upon us two:
Our fleſh thou yaf us, take our fleſh us fro,
And ete ynough. Right thus they to him ſeide,
And after that, within a day or two,
They laide hem in his lappe adoun and deide.

Himſelf diſpeired eke for hunger ſtarf.
Thus ended is this mighty Erl of Piſe;
From high eſtat Fortune away him carf.
Of this tragedie it ought ynough ſuffice;
Who ſo wol here it in a longer wiſe
Redeth the grete poete of Italie
That highte Dante, for he can it deviſe
Fro point to point; not o word wol he faille.

THE NONNES PREESTES PROLOGUE.

Ho! quod the Knight, good Sire, no more of this;
That ye han ſaid is right ynough ywis,
And mochel more; for litel hevineſſe
Is right ynough to mochel folk I geſſe.
I ſay for me it is a gret diſeſe
Wher as men have ben in gret wealth and eſe
To heren of hir ſoden fail, alas!
And the contrary is joye and gret ſolas,
As whan a man hath ben in poure eſtat,
And climbeth up and wexeth fortunat,
And ther abideth in proſperitee:
Swich thing is gladſom as it thinketh me,
And of ſwiche thing were goodly for to telle.
Ye, quod our Hoſte, by Seint Poules belle,
Ye ſay right ſoth. this Monk hath clapped loude;
He ſpake how Fortune covered with a cloude
I wote not what, and als of a tragedie
Right now ye herd; and parde no remedie
It is for to bewailen ne complaine
That that is don, and als it is a paine,
As ye han ſaid, to here of hevineſſe.
Sire Monk, no more of this, ſo God you bleſſe;
Your Tale anoyeth all this compagnie;
Swiche talking is not worth a boterflie,
For therin is ther no diſport ne game;
Therfore Sire Monk, Dan Piers by your name,
I pray you hertely tell us ſomwhat elles,
For ſikerly n'ere of your belles
That on your bridel hange on every ſide,
By heven king, that for us alle dide,
I ſhuld er this have fallen doun for ſlepe,
Although the ſlough had ben never ſo depe,
Than hadde your Tale all ben told in vain:
For certainly, as that thiſe clerkes ſain,
Wher as a man may have non audience
Nought helpeth it to tellen his ſentence;
And wel I wote the ſubſtance is in me
If any thing ſhal wel reported be.
Sire, ſay ſomwhat of hunting I you pray.
Nay, quod this Monk, I have not luſt to play:
Now lette another telle as I have told.
Than ſpake our Hoſte with rude ſpeche and bold,
And ſayd unto the Nonnes Preeſt anon,
Come nere, thou Preeſt, come hither, thou Sire John;
Telle us ſwiche thing as may our hertes glade:
Be blithe although thou ride upon a jade.
What though thin horſe be both foule and lene?
If he wol ſerve thee recke thee not a bene:
Loke that thyn herte be mery evermo.
Yes, Hoſte, quod he, ſo mote I ride or go
But I be mery ywis I wol be blamed.
And right anon his Tale he hath attamed;
And thus he ſaid unto us everich on,
This ſwete Preeſt, this goodly man, Sire John.

THE NONNES PREESTES TALE*.

A POURE widewe, ſomdel ſtoupen in age,
Was whilom dwelling in a narwe cotage
Beſide a grove ſtonding in a dale.
This widewe, which I tell you of my Tale,
Sin thilke day that ſhe was laſt a wif
In patience led a ful ſimple lif,
For litel was hire catel and hire rente;
By huſbondry of ſwiche as God hire ſente
She found hireſelf and eke hire doughtren two.
Three large ſowes had ſhe, and no mo,
Three kine, and eke a ſheep that highte Malle:
Ful ſooty was hire boure and eke hire halle,
In which ſhe ete many a ſlender mele;
Of poinant ſauce ne knew ſhe never a dele:
No deintee morſel paſſed thurgh hire throte;
Hire diete was accordant to hire cote:
Repletion ne made hire never ſike;
Attempre diete was all hire phyſike,

* Of a cock and a hen; the moral whereof is to embrace true friends, and to beware of flatterers. *Urry.*

And exercise, and hertes suffisance:
The goute let hire nothing for to dance,
Ne apoplexie shente not hire hed:
No win ne dranke she nyther white ne red:
Hire bord was served most with white and blak,
Milk and broun bred, in which she fond no lack,
Seinde bacon, and somtime an eye or twey,
For she was as it were a maner dey.
A yerd she had enclosed all about
With stickes, and a drie diche without,
In which she had a cok highte Chaunteclere,
In all the land of crowing n'as his pere:
His vois was merier than the mery orgon
On masse daies that in the chirches gon:
Wel sikerer was his crowing in his loge
Than is a clok or any abbey orloge:
By nature he knewe eche ascentioun
Of the equinoctial in thilke toun,
For whan degrees fiftene were ascended
Than crew he that it might not ben amended.
His combe was redder than the fin corall,
Enbattelled as it were a castel wall;
His bill was black, and as the jet it shone,
Like asure were his legges and his tone,
His nailes whiter than the lily flour,
And like the burned gold was his colour.
This gentil cok had in his governance
Seven hennes for to don all his plesance,
Which were his susters and his paramoures,
And wonder like to him as of coloures,
Of which the fairest, hewed in the throte,
Was cleped faire Damoselle Pertelote.
Curteis she was, discrete, and debonaire,
And compenable, and bare hireself so faire,
Sithen the day that she was sevennight old,
That trewelich she hath the herte in hold
Of Chaunteclere, loken in every lith;
He loved hire so that wel was him therwith:
But swiche a joye it was to here hem sing,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to spring,
In swete accord, My lefe is fare in lond.
For thilke time, as I have understond,
Bestes and briddes couden speke and sing.
And so befell that in a dawening
As Chaunteclere among his wives alle
Sate on his perche that was in the halle,
And next him sate his faire Pertelote,
This Chaunteclere gan gronnen in his throte
As man that in his dreme is dretched sore;
And whan that Pertelote thus herd him rore
She was agast, and saide, Herte dere!
What aileth you to grone in this manere?
Ye ben a veray sleper, fy for shame!
And he answered and sayde thus; Madame,
I pray you that ye take it not agrefe;
By God me mete I was in swiche mischefe
Right now, that ye min herte is sore afright.
Now God (quod he) my sweven recche aright,
And kepe my body out of foule prisoun.
My mete how that I romed up and doun
Within our yerde, wher as I saw a beste
Was like an hound, and wold han made areste
Upon my body, and han had me ded:
His colour was betwix yelwe and red,
And tipped was his tail and both his eres
With black, unlike the remenant of his heres:
His snout was smal, with glowing eyen twey;
Yet for his loke almost for fere I dey:
This caused me my groning douteles.
Away, quod she; fy on you herteles!
Alas! quod she, for by that God above
Now han ye lost myn herte and all my love:
I cannot love a coward by my faith;
For certes, what so any woman saith,
We al desiren, if it mighte be,
To have an husbond hardy, wise, and free,
And secree, and non niggard ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,
Ne non avantour by that God above.
How dorsten ye for shame say to your love
That any thing might maken you aferde?
Han ye no mannes herte and han a berde?
Alas! and con ye ben agast of swevenis?
Nothing but vanitee, God wote, in sweven is.
Swevenes engendren of repletions,
And oft of fume, and of complexions,
Whan humours ben to habundant in a wight.
Certes this dreme which ye han met to-night
Cometh of the gret superfluitee
Of youre rede *colera* parde,
Which causeth folk to dreden in hir dremes
Of arwes, and of fire with rede lemes,
Of rede bestes that they wol hem bite,
Of conteke, and of waspes gret and lite,
Right as the humour of melancolie
Causeth ful many a man in slepe to crie
For fere of bolles and of beres blake,
Or elles that blake devils wol hem take.
Of other humours coud I telle also,
That werken many a man in slepe and wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.
Lo Caton, which that was so wise a man,
Said he not thus? Ne do no force of dremes.
Now, Sire, quod she, whan we flee fro the bemes
For Goddes love as take som laxatif:
Up peril of my soul and of my lif
I conseil you the best, I wol not lie,
That both of coler and of melancolie
Ye purge you; and for ye shul not tarie,
Though in this toun be non apotecarie,
I shal myself two herbes techen you
That shal be for your hele and for your prow,
And in our yerde the herbes shal I finde,
The which han of hir propretee by kinde
To purgen you benethe and eke above.
Sire, forgete not this for Goddes love;
Ye ben ful colerike of complexion;
Ware that the sonne in his ascention
Ne finde you not replete of humours hote;
And if it do I dare wel lay a grote
That ye shul han a fever tertiane,
Or elles an ague, that may be your bane.
A day or two ye shul han digestives
Of wormes or ye take your laxatives,
Of laureole, centaurie, and fumetere,
Or elles of ellebor that groweth there,
Of catapuce or of gaitre beries,
Or erbe ive growing in our yerd that mery is;

Picke hem right as they grow, and ete hem in.
Beth mery, huſbond; for your fader kin
Dredeth no dreme: I can ſay you no more.
Madame, quod he, *grand mercy* of your lore;
But natheles as touching Dan Caton,
That hath of wiſdome ſwiche a gret renoun,
Though that he bade no dremes for to drede,
By God men moun in olde bookes rede
Of many a man more of auctoritee
Than ever Caton was, ſo mote I the,
That all the revers ſayn of his ſentence,
And han wel found..n by experience
That dremes ben ſignifications
As wel of joye as tribulations
That folk enduren in this lif preſent:
Ther nedeth make of this non argument;
The veray preve ſheweth it indede.
On of the greteſt auctours that men rede
Saith thus, that whilom twey felawes wente
On pilgrimage in a ful good entente,
And happed ſo they came into a toun
Wher ther was ſwiche a congregatioun
Of peple, and eke ſo ſtreit of herbergage,
That they ne founde as moche as a cotage
In which they bothe might ylogged be,
Wherfore they muſten of neceſſitee;
As for that night, departen compagnie,
And eche of hem goth to his hoſtelrie,
And toke his logging as it wolde falle.
That on of hem was logged in a ſtalle,
Fer in a yard, with oxen of the plough,
That other man was logged wel ynough,
As was his aventure or his fortune,
That us governeth all, as in commune.
And ſo befell that long or it were day
This man met in his bed ther as he lay
How that his felaw gan upon him calle,
And ſaid, Alas! for in an oxes ſtalle
This night ſhal I be mordred ther I lie;
Now help me, dere brother! or I die:
In alle haſte come to me, he ſaide.
This man out of his ſlepe for fere abraide;
But whan that he was waked of his ſlepe
He turned him, and toke of this no kepe;
Him thought his dreme was but a vanitee.
Thus twies in his ſleping dremed he.
And at the thridde time yet his felaw
Came, as him thought, and ſaid, I now am ſlaw;
Behold my blody woundes depe and wide:
Ariſe up erly in the morwe tide,
And at the weſt gate of the toun (quod he)
A carte ful of donge ther ſhalt thou ſee,
In which my body is hid prively;
Do thilke carte arreſten boldely.
My gold cauſed my mordre, ſoth to ſain;
And told him every point how he was ſlain
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe;
And truſteth wel his dreme he found ful trewe;
For on the morwe ſone as it was day
To his felawes inne he toke his way,
And whan that he came to this oxes ſtalle
After his felaw he began to calle.
The hoſteler anſwered him anon,
And ſaide, Sire, your felaw is agon;
As ſone as day he went out of the toun.
This man gan fallen in ſuſpecioun,
Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
And forth he goth, no lenger wold he lette,
Unto the weſt gate of the toun, and fond
A dong carte as it went for to dong lond,
That was arraied in the ſame wiſe
As ye han herde the dede man deviſe,
And with an harde herte he gan to crie
Vengeance and juſtice of this felonie;
My felaw mordred is this ſame night,
And in this carte he lith gaping upright.
I crie out on the miniſters, quod he,
That ſhulden kepe and reulen this citee:
Harow! alas! here lith my felaw ſlain.
What ſhuld I more unto this tale ſain?
The peple out ſtert, and caſt the cart to ground,
And in the middel of the dong they found
The dede man that mordred was all newe.
O bliſful God! that art ſo good and trewe,
Lo, how that thou bewreyeſt mordre alway!
Mordre wol out, that ſee we day by day:
Mordre is ſo wlatſom and abhominable
To God, that is ſo juſt and reſonable,
That he ne wol not ſuffre it hylled be:
Though it abide a yere, or two or three,
Mordre wol out; this is my concluſioun.
And right anon the miniſtres of the toun
Han hent the carter, and ſo ſore him pined,
And eke the hoſteler ſo ſore engined,
That they beknewe hir wickedneſſe anon,
And were anhanged by the necke bon.
Here moun ye ſee that dremes ben to drede.
And certes in the ſame book I rede,
Right in the next chapitre after this,
(I gabbe not, ſo have I joye and blis)
Two men that wold han paſſed over the ſee,
For certain cauſe, in to a fer contree,
If that the winde ne hadde ben contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie
That ſtood ful mery upon a haven ſide:
But on a day, again the even tide,
The wind gan change, and blew right as hem leſt:
Jolif and glad they wenten to hir reſt,
And caſten hem fulerly for to ſaile;
But to that o man fel a gret mervaile.
That on of hem in ſleping as he lay
He mette a wonder dreme again the day:
Him thought a man ſtood by his beddes ſide,
And him commanded that he ſhuld abide,
And ſaid him thus; If thou to-morwe wende
Thou ſhalt be dreint; my tale is at an ende.
He woke, and told his felaw what he met,
And praied him his viage for to let;
As for that day he prayd him for to abide.
His felaw, that lay by his beddes ſide,
Gan for to laugh, and ſcorned him ful faſte:
No dreme, quod he, may ſo my herte agaſte
That I wol leten for to do my thinges:
I ſette not a ſtraw by thy dreminges,
For ſwevens ben but vanitees and japes:
Men dreme al day of oules and of apes,
And eke of many a maſe therwithal;
Men dreme of thing that never was ne ſhal

But ſith I ſee that thou wol there abide,
And thus forſlouthen wilfully thy tide,
God wot it reweth me; and have good day:
And thus he took his leve, and went his way.
But or that he had half his cours yſailed,
N'or I not why ne what meſchance it ailed,
But caſuelly the ſhippes bottom rente,
And ſhip and man under the water wente
In ſight of other ſhippes ther beſide
That with him ſailed at the ſame tide.
And therfore, faire Pertelote ſo dere,
By ſwiche enſamples olde maiſt thou lere
That no man ſhulde be to recchelès
Of dremes, for I ſay thee douteles
That many a dreme ful ſore is for to drede.
Lo, in the lif of Seint Kenelme I rede,
That was Kenulphus ſone, the noble King
Of Mercenrike, how Kenſelm mette a thing.
A litel or he were mordred on a day
His mordre in his aviſion he ſay;
His norice him expouned every del
His ſweven, and bade him for to kepe him wel
For treſon; but he n'as but ſeven yere old,
And therfore litel tale hath he told
Of any dreme, ſo holy was his herte.
By God I hadde lever than my ſherte
That ye had red his legend as have I.
Dame Pertelote, I ſay you trewely,
Macrobius, that writ the aviſion
In Affrike of the worthy Scipion,
Affirmeth dremes, and ſayth that they ben
Warning of thinges that men after ſeen.
And forthermore, I pray you loketh wel
In The Olde Teſtament of Daniel,
If he held dremes any vanitee.
Rede eke of Joſeph, and ther ſhuln ye ſee
Wher dremes ben ſomtime (I ſay not alle)
Warning of thinges that ſhuln after falle.
Loke of Egipt the king, Dan Pharao,
His baker and his boteler alſo,
Wheder they ne felten non effect in dremes.
Who ſo wol ſeken actes of ſondry remes
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.
Lo Creſus, which that was of Lydie king,
Mette he not that he ſat upon a tree?
Which ſignified he ſhuld anhanged be.
Lo hire Adromacha, Hectores wif,
That day that Hector ſhulde leſe his lif,
She dremed on the ſame nighte beforne
How that the lif of Hector ſhuld be lorne
If thilke day he went into bataille;
She warned him, but it might not availle;
He went forth for to fighten natheles,
And was yſlain anon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
And eke it is nigh day, I may not dwelle.
Shortly I ſay, as for concluſion,
That I ſhal han of this aviſion
Adverſitee; and I ſay forthermore,
That I ne tell of laxatives no ſtore,
For they ben venimous, I wot it wel:
I hem deffie; I love hem never a del.
But let us ſpeke of mirthe, and ſtinte all this.
Madame Pertelote, ſo have I blis,
Of o thing God hath ſent me large grace,
For whan I ſee the beautee of your face,
Ye ben ſo ſcarlet red about your eyen,
It maketh all my drede for to dien;
For al ſo ſiker as *In principio*
Mulier eſt hominis confuſio,
(Madame, the ſentence of this Latine is,
Woman is mannes joye and mannes blis;)
For whan I fele a-night your ſofte ſide,
Al be it that I may not on you ride
For that our perche is made ſo narwe, alas!
I am ſo ful of joye and of ſolas
That I deffie bothe ſweven and dreme.
And with that word he flew doun fro the beme,
For it was day, and eke his hennes alle,
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he had found a corn lay in the yerd.
Real he was, he was no more aferd;
He fethered Pertelote twenty time,
And trade hire eke as oft, er it was prime;
He loketh as it were a grim leoun,
And on his toos he rometh up and doun;
Him deigned not to ſet his feet to ground;
He chukketh, whan he hath a corn yfound,
And to him rennen than his wives alle.
Thus real as a prince is in his halle
Leve I this Chaunteclere in his paſture,
And after wol I tell his aventure.
Whan that the month in which the world began,
That highte March, whan God firſt maked man,
Was complete, and ypaſſed were alſo
Sithen March ended thritty dayes and two,
Befell that Chaunteclere in all his pride,
His ſeven wives walking him beſide,
Caſt up his eyen to the brighte ſonne,
That in the ſigne of Taurus hadde yronne
Twenty degrees and on, and ſomwhat more:
He knew by kind, and by non other lore,
That it was prime, and crew with blisful ſteven.
The ſonne, he ſaid, is clomben up on heven
Twenty degrees and on, and more ywis;
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
Herkeneth thiſe blisful briddes how they ſing,
And ſee the freſhe floures how they ſpring;
Ful is min herte of revel and of ſolas.
But ſodenly him fell a ſorweful cas,
For ever the latter ende of joye is wo;
God wote that worldly joye is ſone ago;
And if a rethor coude faire endite
He in a chronicle might it ſaufly write
As for a ſoveraine notabilitee.
Now every wiſe man let him herken me:
This ſtory is al ſo trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot du Lake,
That women holde in ful gret reverence.
Now wol I turne agen to my ſentence.
A col fox, ful of ſleigh iniquitee,
That in the grove had wonned yeres three,
By high imagination forecaſt,
The ſame night thurghout the hegges braſt
Into the yerd ther Chaunteclere the faire
Was wont, and eke his wives, to repaire,
And in a bedde of wortes ſtille he lay
Till it was paſſed undern of the day,

Waiting his time on Chaunteclere to falle,
As gladly don thiſe homicides alle
That in await liggen to mordre men.
O falſe morderour! rucking in thy den,
O newe Scariot, newe Genelon!
O falſe diſſimulour, o Greek Sinon!
That broughteſt Troye al utterly to ſorwe,
O Chaunteclere! accurſed be the morwe
That thou into thy yerd flew fro the bemes;
Thou were ful wel ywarned by thy dremes
That thilke day was perilous to thee:
But what that God forewote moſt nedes be,
After the opinion of certain clerkes,
Witneſſe on him that any parfit clerk is,
That in ſcole is gret altercation
In this matere and gret diſputiſon,
And hath ben of an hundred thouſand men:
But I ne cannot boult it to the bren,
As can the holy Doctour Auguſtin,
Or Boece, or the biſhop Bradwardin,
Whether that Goddes worthy foreweting
Streineth me nedely for to don a thing,
(Nedely clepe I ſimple neceſſitee)
Or elles if free chois be granted me
To do that ſame thing or do it nought,
Though God forewot it or that it was wrought,
Or if his weting ſtreineth never a del
But by neceſſitee condicionel.
I wol not han to don of ſwiche matere;
My Tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
That took his conſeil of his wif with ſorwe
To walken in the yerd upon the morwe
That he had met the dreme, as I you told.
Womennes conſeiles ben ful often cold;
Womennes conſeil brought us firſt to wo,
And made Adam fro Paradis to go,
Ther as he was ful mery and wel at eſe:
But for I n'ot to whom I might diſpleſe
If I conſeil of women wolde blame,
Paſſe over, for I ſaid it in my game.
Rede auctours where they trete of ſwiche matere,
And what they ſayn of women ye mown here.
Thiſe ben the Cokkes wordes and not mine;
I can non harme of no woman devine.
Faire in the ſond, to bath hire merily,
Lith Pertelote, and all hire ſuſters by,
Agein the ſonne, and Chaunteclere ſo free
Sang merrier than the mermaid in the ſee,
For Phiſiologus ſayth ſikerly
How that they ſingen wel and merily.
And ſo befell that as he caſt his eye
Among the wortes on a boterflie
He was ware of this fox that lay ful low:
Nothing ne liſt him thaune for to crow,
But cried anon Cok, cok, and up he ſterte
As man that was affraied in his herte;
For naturally a beeſt deſireth flee
Fro his contrarie if he may it ſee,
Though he never erſt had ſeen it with his eye.
This Chaunteclere, whan he gan him eſpie,
He wold han fled, but that the fox anon
Said, Gentil Sire, alas! what wol ye don?
Be ye affraid of me that am your frend?
Now certes I were werſe than any fend
If I to you wold harme or vilanie.
I n'am not come your conſeil to eſpie,
But trewely the cauſe of my coming
Was only for to herken how ye ſing,
For trewely ye han as mery a ſteven
As any angel hath that is in heven,
Therwith ye han of muſike more feling
Than had Boece, or any that can ſing.
My Lord, your fader (God his ſoule bleſſe)
And eke your moder of hire gentilleſſe
Han in myn hous yben, to my gret eſe,
And certes, Sire, ful fain wold I you pleſe.
But for men ſpeke of ſingen, I wol ſcy,
So mote I brouken wel min eyen twey,
Save you ne herd I never man ſo ſing
As did your fader in the morwening:
Certes it was of herte all that he ſong:
And for to make his nois the more ſtrong
He wold ſo peine him, that with both his eyen
He muſte winke, ſo loude he walde crien,
And ſtonden on his tiptoon therwithal,
And ſtretchen forth his necke long and ſmal.
And eke he was of ſwiche diſcretion,
That ther n'as no man in no region
That him in ſong or wiſdom mighte paſſe.
I have wel red in Dan Burnel the aſſe
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok
That for a preeſtes ſone yave him a knok
Upon his leg, while he was yonge and nice,
He made him for to leſe his benefice;
But certain ther is no compariſon
Betwix the wiſdom and diſcretion
Of your fader and his ſubtilitee.
Now ſingeth, Sire, for Seint Charitee:
Let ſee, can ye your fader counterfete?
This Chaunteclere his winges gan to bete,
As man that coud not his treſon eſpie,
So was he raviſhed with his flaterie.
Alas! ye lordes, many a falſe flatour
Is in your court, and many a loſengeour,
That pleſeth you wel more, by my faith,
Than he that ſothfaſtneſſe unto you ſaith,
Redeth Eccleſiaſt of flaterie:
Beth ware, ye lordes, of hire trecherie.
This Chaunteclere ſtood high upon his toos
Streching his necke, and held his eyen cloos
And gan to crowen loude for the nones;
And Dan Ruſſel the fox ſtert up at ones,
And by the gargat hente Chaunteclere,
And on his back toward the wood him bere,
For yet ne was ther no man that him ſued.
O deſtinee! that maiſt not ben eſchued,
Alas that Chaunteclere flew fro the bemes!
Alas, his wif ne raughte not of dremes!
And on a Friday fel all this meſchance.
O Venus! that art goddeſſe of Pleſance,
Sin that thy ſervant was this Chaunteclere,
And in thy ſervice did all his powere,
More for delit than world to multiplie,
Why wolt thou ſuffre him on thy day to die?
O Gaufride, dere maiſter ſoverain!
That whan thy worthy King Richard was ſlain
With ſhot complainedeſt his deth ſo ſore,
Why ne had I now thy ſcience and thy lore

The Friday for to chiden as did ye?
(For on a Friday ſothly ſlain was he)
Then wold I ſhew you how that I coud plaine
For Chauntecleres drede and for his paine.
Certes ſwiche cry ne lamentation
Was never of ladies made whan Ilion
Was wonne, and Pirrus with ſtreite ſwerd,
When he had hen King Priam by the herd
And ſlain him, (as ſaith us *Enidos*)
As maden all the hennes in the cloos
Whan they had ſeen of Chaunteclere the ſight;
But ſoverainly Dame Pertelote ſhright
Ful louder than did Haſdruballes wif
Whan that hire huſbond hadde yloſt his lif,
And that the Romaines hadden brent Cartage;
She was ſo ful of turment and of rage
That wilfully into the fire ſhe ſterte,
And brent hire ſelven with a ſtedfaſt herte.
O woful hennes! right ſo criden ye
As whan that Nero brente the citee
Of Rome cried the Senatoures wives
For that hir huſbonds loſten alle hir lives.
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem ſlain.
Now, wol I turne unto my Tale again.
The ſely widewe and hire doughtren two
Harden theſe hennes crie and maken wo,
And out at the dores ſterten they anon,
And ſaw the fox toward the wode is gon,
And bare upon his back the cok away:
They crieden out Harow and wala wa!
A ha the fox! and after him they ran,
And eke with ſtaves many an other man;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot and Gerlond,
And Malkin, with hire diſtaf in hire hond;
Ran cow and calf; and eke the veray hogges
So fered were for barking of the dogges,
And ſhouting of the men and women eke,
They ronnan ſo hem thought hir hertes breke;
They yelleden as fendes don in helle;
The dokes crieden as men wold hem quelle:
The gees for fere flewen over the trees,
Out of the hive came the ſwarme of bees,
So hidous was the noiſe, a *benedicite!*
Certes he Jakke Straw and his meinie
Ne maden never ſhoutes half ſo ſhrille,
Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,
As thilke day was made upon the fox.
Of bras they broughten beemes and of box,
Of horn and bone, in which they blew and pouped,
And therwithal they ſhriked and they houped;
It ſemed as that the heven ſhulde falle.
Now, goode men, I pray you herkeneth alle:
Lo how Fortune turneth ſodenly
The hope and pride eke of hire enemy!
This cok that lay upon the foxes bake,
In all his drede unto the fox he ſpake,
And ſayde; Sire, if that I were as ye
Yet wold I ſain, (as wiſly God help me)
Turneth agein, ye proude cherles alle,
A very peſtilence upon you falle:
Now I am come unto the wodes ſide,
Maugre your hed the cok ſhal here abide;
I wol him ete in faith, and that anon.
The fox anſwered, in faith it ſhal be don;
And as he ſpake the word al ſodenly
The cok brake from his mouth deliverly,
And high upon a tree he flew anon.
And whan the fox ſaw that the cok was gon,
Alas! quod he, o Chaunteclere, alas!
I have (quod he) ydon to you treſpas,
In as moche as I maked you aferd
Whan I you hente and brought out of your yerd
But, Sire, I did it in no wikke entente:
Come doun, and I ſhal tell you what I mente:
I ſhal ſay ſothe to you, God helpe me ſo.
Nay than quod he, I ſhrewe us bothe two;
And firſt I ſhrewe myſelf bothe blood and bones
If thou begile me oftener than ones:
Thou ſhalt no more thurgh thy flaterie
Do me to ſing and winken with mine eye,
For he that winketh whan he ſhulde ſee,
Al wilfully, God let him never the.
Nay, quod the fox, but God yeve him meſchance
That is ſo indiſcrete of governance
That jangleth whan that he ſhuld hold his pees.
Lo, which it is for to be reccheles
And negligent, and truſt on flaterie.
But ye that holden this Tale a folie,
As of a fox, or of a cok or hen,
Taketh the moralitee therof, good men;
For Seint Poule ſayth, that all that writen is
To our doctrine it is ywriten ywis.
Taketh the fruit, and let the chaf be ſtille.
Now, goode God, if that it be thy wille,
As ſayth my Lord, ſo make us all good men,
And bring us to thy high bliſſe. *Amen*
Sire Nonnes Preeſt, our Hoſte ſayd anon,
Ybleſſed be thy breche and every ſton;
This was a mery Tale of Chaunteclere:
But by my trouthe if thou were ſeculere
Thou woldeſt ben a tredefoule a right,
For if thou have corage as thou haſt might
Thee were nede of hennes, as I wene,
Ye mo than ſeven times ſeventene.
Se whiche braunes hath this gentil Preeſt,
So gret a neck, and ſwiche a large breeſt
He loketh as a ſparhauk with his eyen:
Him nedeth not his colour for to dien
With Braſil ne with grain of Portingale,
But, Sire, faire falle you for your Tale.
And after that he with ful mery chere
Sayd to another as ye ſhulen here.

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THE SECOND NONNES TALE*.

THE miniſtre and the norice unto vices,
Which that men clepe in Engliſh Idelneſſe,
That porter at the gate is of Delices,
To eſchuen, and by hire contrary hire oppreſſe,
That is to ſain, by leful beſineſſe.
Wel oughte we to don al our entente,
Leſt that the fend thurgh idelneſſe us hente.
For he that with his thouſand cordes ſlie
Continuelly us waiteth to be clappe,
Whan he may man in idelneſſe eſpie,
He can ſo lightly cacche him in his trappe,
Til that a man be hent right by the lappe
He n'is not ware the fend hath hint in hond:
Wel ought us werche and idelneſſe withſtond.
And though men dradden never for to die,
Yet ſee men wel by reſon douteles
That idelneſſe is rote of ſlogardie,
Of which ther never cometh no good encrees,
And ſee that ſlouth holdeth hem in a lees,
Only to ſlepe and for to ete and drinke,
And to devouren all that other ſwinke.
And for to put us from ſwiche idelneſſe,
That cauſe is of gret confuſion,
I have here don my feithful beſineſſe,
After the legende, in tranſlation
Right of thy glorious lif and paſſion,
Thou with thy gerlond wrought of roſe and lilie,
Thee mene I, maid and martir, Seinte Cecilie,
And thou, that arte floure of virgines all,
Of whom that Bernard liſt ſo wel to write,
To thee at my beginning firſt I call,
Thou comfort of us wretches, do me endite
Thy maidens deth, that wan thurgh hire merite
The eternal lif, and over the fend victorie,
As man may after reden in hire ſtorie.
Thou maide and mother, doughter of thy ſon,
Thou wel of mercy, ſinful ſoules cure,
In whom that God of bountee chees to won;
Thou humble and high over every creature,
Thou nobledeſt ſo fer forth our nature,
That no diſdaine the maker had of kinde
His ſon in blood and fleſh to clothe and winde.
Within the cloyſtre blisful of thy ſides
Toke mannes ſhape the eternal Love and Pees,
That of the trine compas Lord and guide is,
Whom erthe, and ſee, and heven, out of relees
Ay herien; and thou virgine wemmeles
Bare of thy body (and dwelteſt maiden pure)
The Creatour of every creature.
Aſſembled in thee magnificence
With mercy goodneſſe, and with ſwiche piter,
That thou that art the ſonne of excellence,
Not only helpeſt hem that praien thee,
But oftentime of thy benignitee
Ful freely, or that men thin helpe beſeche,
Thou goeſt beforne and art hir lives leche.
Now helpe, thou meke and blisful faire maid
Me flamed wretch, in this deſert of galle;
Thinke on the woman Cananee, that ſaide
That whelpes eten ſom of the cromes alle
That from hir lordes table been yfalle;
And though that I, unworthy ſone of Eve,
Be ſinful, yet accepteth my beleve.
And for that feith is ded withouten werkes,
So for to werken yeve me wit and ſpace
That I be quit from thennes that moſt derke is
O thou! that art ſo faire and ful of grace,
Be thou min advocat in that high place,
Ther as withouten ende is ſonge Oſanne,
Thou Criſtes mother, doughter dere of Anne.
And of thy light my ſoule in priſon light,
That troubled is by the contagion
Of my body, and alſo by the wight
Of erthly luſt and falſe affection:
O haven of refute! o ſalvation
Of hem that ben in ſorwe and in diſtreſſe!
Now help, for to my werk I wol me dreſſe.
Yet pray I you that reden that I write
Foryeve me that I do no diligence
This ilke ſtorie ſubtilly to endite;
For both have I the wordes and ſentence
Of him that at the ſeintes reverence
The ſtorie wrote, and folowed hire legende,
And pray you that ye wol my werk amende.
Firſt wol I you the name of Seinte Cecilie
Expoune, as men may in hire ſtorie ſee;
It is to ſayn in Engliſh, Hevens lilie,
For pure chaſtneſſe of virginitee,
Or for ſhe whitneſſe had of honeſtee,
And grene of conſcience, and of good fame
The ſwote ſavour, Lilie was hire name.

* The life and death of Saint Cecily. Sp.

Or Cecile is to ſayn, The way to blinde,
For ſhe enſample was by good teching,
Or elles Cecilie, as I writen finde,
Ijoined by a maner conjoining
Of heven and *Lia*, and here in figuring
The heven is ſet for thought of holineſſe,
And *Lia* for hire laſting beſineſſe.

Cecilie may eke be ſayd in this manere,
Wanting of blindneſſe, for hire grete light
Of ſapience, and for hire thewes clere;
Or elles ſo this maidens name bright
Of heven and *Leos* cometh, for which by right
Men might hire wel the heven of peple calle,
Enſample of good and wiſe werkes alle.

For *Leos* peple in Engliſh is to ſay:
And right as men may in the heven ſee
The ſonne and mone, and ſterres, every way,
Right ſo men goſtly, in this maiden free
Iwen of faith the magnanimitee,
And eke the clereneſſe hole of ſapience,
And ſondry werkes bright of excellence.

And right ſo as thiſe philoſophres write,
That heven is ſwift and round, and eke brenning,
Right ſo was faire Cecilie the white
Ful ſwift and beſy in every good werking,
And round and hole in good perſevering,
And brenning ever in charitiee ful bright.
Now have I you delcared what ſhe hight.

This maiden bright Cecile, as hire life faith,
Was come of Romaines and noble kind,
And from hire cradle foſtred in the faith
Of Criſt, and bare his goſpel in hire mind:
Ne never ceſed, as I writen find,
Of hire prayere, and God to love and drede,
Beſeching him to kepe hire maidenhede.

And whan this maiden ſhuld until a man
Ywedded be that was ful yonge of age,
Which that ycleped was Valerian,
And day was comen of hire marriage,
Ne ful devout and humble in hire corage,
Under hire robe of gold, that fat ful faire
Had next hire fleſh yclad hire in an haire.

And while that the organs maden melodie
To God alone thus in hire hert ſong ſhe;
O Lord! my ſoule and eke my bodie gie
Unwemmed, leſt that I confounded be.
And for his love that died upon the tree
Every ſecond or thridde day ſhe faſt,
Ay bidding in hire oriſons ful faſt.

The night came, and to bed muſt ſhe gon
With hire huſbond, as it is the manere,
And prively ſhe ſaid to him anon;
O ſwete and wel beloved ſpouſe dere!
Ther is a conſeil, and ye wol it here,
Which that right fayn I wold unto you faie,
So that ye ſwere ye wol it not bewraie.

Valerian gan faſt unto hire ſwere
That for no cas ne thing that mighte be
He ſhulde never to non bewraien here;
And than at erſt thus to him ſaide ſhe;
I have an angel which that loveth me,
That with gret love wher ſo I wake or ſlepe
Is redy ay my body for to kepe:

And if that he may felen out of drede
That ye me touch or love in vilanie,
He right anon wol ſleen you with the dede,
And in your youthe thus ye ſhulden die;
And if that ye in clene love me gie,
He wol you love as me for your clenenеſſe,
And ſhew to you his joye and his brightneſſe.

This Valerian, corrected as God wold,
Anſwered again; If I ſhal truſten thee
Let me that angel ſeen and him behold,
And if that it a veray angel be,
Than wol I don as thou haſt prayed me;
And if thou love another man, forſothe
Right with this ſwerd then wol I ſlee you bothe.

Cecile anſwerd anon right in this wiſe:
If that you liſt the angel ſhul you ſee,
So that ye trowe on Criſt, and you baptiſe:
Go forth to Via Apia, (quod ſhe)
That fro this toun ne ſtant but miles three,
And to the poure folkes that ther dwellen
Say hem right thus as that I ſhal you tellen.

Tell hem that I Cecile you to hem ſent
To ſhewen you the good Urban the old,
For ſecree nedes and for good entent;
And whan that ye Seint Urban han behold,
Tell him the wordes whiche I to you told:
And whan that he hath purged you fro ſinne
Than ſhal ye ſeen that angel ere ye twinne.

Valerian is to the place gon,
And right as he was taught by hire lerning
He fond this holy old Urban anon
Among the ſeintes buriels louting;
And he anon withouten tarying
Did his meſſage, and whan that he it tolde
Urban for joye his hondes gan upholde.

The teres from his eyen let he falle;
Almighty Lord, o Jeſu Criſt! quod he,
Sower of chaſt conſeil, hierde of us alle,
The fruit of thilk ſeede of chaſtitee
That thou haſt ſow in Cecile take to thee:
Lo, like a beſy bee withouten gile
Thee ſerveth ay thin owen thral Cecile.

For thilk ſpouſe that ſhe toke but newe,
Ful like a fiers leon, ſhe ſendeth here
As meke as ever was any lamb or ewe.
And with that word anon ther gan apere
An old man clad in white clothes clere,
That had a book with letters of gold in hond,
And gan beforne Valerian to ſtond.

Valerian as ded fell doun for drede
Whan he him ſaw, and he up hent him tho,
And on his book right thus he gan to rede:
On Lord, on faith, on God withouten mo,
On Criſtendom, and fader of all alſo
Aboven all, and over all every wher.
Thiſe wordes all with gold ywriten were.

Whan this was red, than ſaid this olde man,
Leveſt thou this thing or no? ſay ye or nay.
I leve all this thing, quod Valerian,
For ſother thing than this I dare wel ſay
Under the heven no wight thinken may.
Tho vaniſhed the olde man he n'iſte wher,
And Pope Urban him criſtened right ther.

Valerian goth home, and fint Cecilie
Within his chambre with an angel ſtonde:
This angel had of roſes and of lilie
Corones two, the which he bare in honde,
And firſt to Cecile, as I underſtonde,

He yaf that on, and after gan he take
That other to Valerian hire make,
With body clene and with unwemmed thought
Kepeth ay wel thise corones two, quod he,
From Paradis to you I have hem brought,
Ne never mo ne shul they roten be,
Ne lese hir swete savour, trusteth me,
Ne never wight shal seen hem with his eye,
But he be chaste and hate vilanie.
And thou, Valerian, for thou so sone
Assentedest to good conseil, also
Say what thee list and thou shalt han thy bone.
I have a brother, quod Valerian tho,
That in this world I love no man so,
I pray you that my brother may have grace
To know the trouth, as I do in this place.
The angel sayd, God liketh thy request,
And bothe with the palme of martirdome
Ye shullen come unto this blissful rest;
And with that word Tiburce his brother come.
And whan that he the savour undernome,
Which that the roses and the lilies cast,
Within his herte he gan to wonder fast,
And said; I wonder this time of the yere
Whenes that swete savour cometh so
Of roses and lilies that I smelle here,
For though I had hem min hondes two
The savour might in me no deper go:
The swete smel that in min herte I find
Hath changed me all in another kind.
Valerian said, Two corones han we
Snow-white and rose-red, that shinen clere,
Which that thin eyen han no might to see,
And as thou smelleste hem thurgh my praiere,
So shalt thou seen hem, leve brother dere,
If it so be thou wolt withouten slouthe
Beleve aright, and know the veray trouthe.
Tiburce answered; Saiest thou this to me
In sothnesse, or in dreme herken I this?
In dremes, quod Valerian, han we be
Unto this time, brother min, ywis;
But now at erst in trouthe our dwelling is.
How wost thou this, quod Tiburce, in what wise?
Quod Valerian, That shal I thee devise.
The angel of God hath me the trouth ytaught,
Which thou shalt seen, if that thou wilt reney
The idoles, and be clene, and elles naught.
And of the miracle of thise corones twey
Seint Ambrose in his preface list to sey;
Solempnely this noble doctour dere
Commendeth it, and saith in this manere:
The palme of martirdome for to receive
Seint Cecilie, fulfilled of Goddes yeft,
The world and eke hire chambre gan she weive,
Witnesse Tiburces and Ceciles shrift,
To which God of his bountee wolde shift
Corones two, of floures wel smelling,
And made his angel hem the corones bring.
The maid hath brought thise men to blisse above;
The world hath wist what it is worth certain,
Devotion of chastitee to love.
Though shewed him Cecile all open and plain
That all idoles n'is but a thing in vain,
For they ben dombe, and therto they ben deve;
And charged him his idoles for to leve.
Who so that troweth not this, a best he is,
Quod this Tiburce, if that I shal not lie.
And she gan kisse his brest whan she herd this,
And was ful glad he coude trouthe espie:
This day I take thee for min allie,
Saide this blissful faire maiden dere;
And after that she said as ye may here:
Lo, right so as the love of Crist (quod she)
Made me thy brothers wif, right in that wise
Anon for min allie here take I thee,
Sithen that thou wolt thin idoles despise.
Goth with thy brother now and thee baptise,
And make thee clene, so that thou maist behold
The angels face of which thy brother told.
Tiburce answered, and saide, Brother dere,
First tell me whither I shal, and to what man.
To whom, quod he, Come for with goode chere,
I wol thee lede unto the Pope Urban.
To Urban? brother min, Valerian,
Quod tho Tiburce, wilt thou me thider lede?
Me thinketh that it were a wonder dede.
Ne meneste thou not Urban (quod he tho)
That is so often damned to be ded,
And woneth in halkes alway to and fro,
And dare not ones putten forth his hed?
Men shold him brennen in a fire so red
If he were found, or that men might him spie,
And we also, to bere him compagnie.
And while we seken thilke divinitee
That is yhid in heven prively,
Algate ybrent in this world shuld we be.
To whom Cecile answered boldely;
Men mighten dreden wel and skilfully
This lif to lese, min owen dere brother!
If this were living only and non other.
But ther is better lif in other place
That never shal be lost, ne drede thee nought,
Which Goddes sone us tolde thurgh his grace,
That fadres sone which alle thinges wrought;
And all that wrought is with a skilful thought,
The gost that from the fader gan procede
Hath souled hem withouten any drede.
By word and by miracle he Goddes sone,
Whan he was in this world, declared here
That ther is other lif ther men may wone.
To whom answerd Tiburce; O suster dere!
Ne saideste thou right now in this manere,
Ther n'is but o God Lord in sothfastnesse,
And now of three how mayst thou bere witnesse?
That shal I tell, quod she, or that I go.
Right as a man hath sapiences three,
Memorie, engine, and intellect also,
So in o being of divinitee
Three persones mowen ther righte wel be.
Tho gan she him ful besily to preche
Of Cristes sonde, and of his peines teche,
And many pointes of his passion,
How Goddes sone in this world was withhold
To don mankinde pleine remission,
That was ybound in sinne and kares cold.
All this thing she unto Tiburce told,

And after this Tiburce in good entent
With Valerian to Pope Urban he went,
That thanked God, and with glad herte and light
He criſtened him, and made him in that place
Parfite in his lerning, and Goddes knight:
And after this Tiburce gat ſwiche grace
That every day he ſaw in time and ſpace
The angel of God and every maner bone
That he God axed it was ſped ful ſone.
Ne were ful hard by ordre for to ſain
How many wonders Jeſus for hem wrought:
But at the laſt, to tellen ſhort and plain,
The ſergeaunts of the toun of Rome hem ſought,
And hem before Almache the Preſect brought,
Which hem appoſed, and knew all hir entent,
And to the image of Jupiter hem ſent.
And ſaid, Who ſo wol nought do ſacrifice
Swap of his hed; this is my ſentence here.
Anon thiſe martyrs that I you deviſe
On Maximus, that was an officere
Of the Preſectes, and his Corniculere
Hem hent, and whan he forth the ſeintes lad
Himſelf he wept for pitee that he had.
Whan Maximus had herd the ſeintes lore
He gate him of the turmentoures leve,
And lad hem to his hous withouten more;
And with hir preching or that it were eve
They gonnen fro the turmentours to reve,
And fro Maxime, and fro his folk eche on,
The falſe faith, to trowe in God alone.
Cecilie came, whan it was waxen night,
With preeſtes that hem criſtened all yſere;
And afterward whan day was waxen light
Cecilie hem ſaid with a ful ſtedfaſt chere,
Now, Criſtes owen knightes leve and dere,
Caſte all away the werkes of derkeneſſe,
And armeth you in armes of brightneſſe.
Ye han forſoth ydon a gret bataille;
Your coure is don; your faith hath you conſerved;
Goth to the croune of lif that may not faille;
The rightful juge, which that ye han ſerved,
Shal yeve it you, as ye han it deſerved.
And whan this thing was ſaid as I deviſe
Men dedde hem forth to don the ſacrifice.
But whan they weren to the place ybrought,
To tellen ſhortly the concluſioun,
They n'olde encenſe ne ſacrifice right nought,
But on hir knees they ſetten hem adoun,
With humble herte and fad devotioun,
And loſten both hir hedes in the place:
Hir ſoules wenten to the King of grace.
This Maximus, that ſaw this thing betide,
With pitous teres told it anon right
That he hir ſoules ſaw to heven glide
With angels, ful of clereneſſe and of light,
And with his word converted many a wight,
For which Almachius did him to-bete
With whip of led til he his lif gan lete.
Cecile him toke and buried him anon
By Tiburce and Valerian ſoftely,
Within hir burying place, under the ſton;
And after this Almachius haſtily
Bad his miniſtres fetchen openly
Cecile, ſo that ſhe might in his preſence
Don ſacrifice, and Jupiter encenſe.
But they, converted at hire wiſe lore,
Wepten ful ſore, and yaven ful credence
Unto hire word, and crieden more and more
Criſt, Goddes ſone, withouten difference,
Is veray God, this is all our ſentence,
That hath ſo good a ſervant him to ſerve:
Thus with o vois we trowen though we ſterve.
Almachius, that herd of this doing,
Bad fetchen Cecile, that he might hire ſee:
And alderfirſt, lo, this was his axing;
What maner woman art thou? quod he.
I am a gentilwoman borne, quod ſhe.
I axe thee, quod he, though it thee greve,
Of thy religion and of thy beleve.
Why than began your queſtion folily,
Quod ſhe, that woldeſt two anſwers conclude
In o demand? Ye axen lewedly.
Almache anſwered to that ſimilitude,
Of whennes cometh thin anſwering ſo rude?
Of whennes? (quod ſhe, whan that ſhe was friened)
Of conſcience, and of good faith unfeined.
Almachius ſaid; Ne takeſt thou non hede
Of my power? And ſhe him anſwerd this;
Your might (quod ſhe) ful litel is to drede,
For every mortal mannes power n'is
But like a bladder ful of wind ywis,
For with a nedles point whan it is blow
May all the boſt of it be laid ful low.
Ful wrongfully begonneſt thou, (quod he)
And yet in wrong is all thy perſeverance:
Woſt thou not how our mighty princes free
Have thus commanded and made ordinance
That every Criſten wight ſhal han penance
But if that he his Criſtendome withſeye,
And gon al quite if he wol it reneye?
Your princes erren, as your nobley doth,
Quod tho Cecile, and with a wood ſentence
Ye make us gilty, and it is not ſoth;
For ye, that knowen wel our innocence,
For as moche as we don ay reverence
To Criſt, and for we bere a Criſten name,
Ye put on us a crime and eke a blame.
But we, that knowen thilke name ſo
For vertuous, we may it not withſeye.
Almache anſwered; Cheſe on of thiſe two,
Do ſacrifice, or Criſtendom reneye,
That thou mow now eſcapen by that wey.
At which this holy bliſful fayre maid
Gan for to laughe, and to the juge ſaid;
O juge! confuſe in thy nicetee,
Woldeſt thou that I reneye innocence?
To maken me a wicked wight (quod ſhe)
Lo, he diſſimuleth here in audience,
He ſtareth and wodeth in his advertence.
To whom Almachius ſaid, Unſely wretch!
Ne woſt thou not how far my might may ſtretch?
Han not our mighty princes to me yeven
Ya bothe power and eke auctoritee
To maken folk to dein or to liven?
Why ſpekeſt thou ſo proudly than to me?
I ne ſpeke nought but ſtedfaſtly, quod ſhe,

Not proudely, for I ſay, as for my ſide
We haten dedly thilke vice of pride.
And if thou drede not a ſoth for to here
Than wol I ſhewe al openly by right
That thou haſt made a ful gret leſing here.
Thou ſaiſt thy princes han thee yeven might
Both for to ſlee and for to quicken a wight.
Thou that ne maiſt but only lif bereve
Thou haſt non other power ne no leve.
But thou maiſt ſayn thy princes han thee maked
Miniſtre of Deth, for if thou ſpeke of mo
Thou lieſt, for thy power is ful naked.
Do way thy boldneſſe, ſaid Almachius tho,
And ſacrifice to our goddes er thou go.
I recke not what wrong that thou me proffre,
For I can ſuffre it as a philoſophre.
But thilke wronges may I not endure
That thou ſpekeſt of our goddes here, quod he.
Cecile anſwerd; O nice creature!
Thou ſaideſt no word ſin thou ſpake to me
That I ne knew therwith thy nicetee,
And that thou were in every maner wiſe
A lewed officer, a vain juſtice.
Ther lacketh nothing to thin utter eyen
That thou n'art blind; for thing that we ſeen alle,
That is a ſton, that men may wel eſpien,
That ilke ſton a god thou wolt it calle:
I rede thee let thin hond upon it falle,
And taſt it wel, and ſton thou ſhalt it find,
Sin that thou ſeeſt not with thin eyen blind.
It is a ſhame that the peple ſhal
So ſcornen thee, and laugh at thy folie,
For comunly men wot it wel over al
That mighty God is in his hevens hie;
And thiſe images, wel maiſt thou eſpie,
To thee ne to nemſelf may not profite,
For in effect they be not worth a mite.
Thiſe and iwiche other wordes ſaid ſhe,
And he wex wroth, and bade men ſhulde hire lede

Home til hire hous, and in hire hous (quod he)
Brenne hire right in a bath with flames rede.
And as he bade right ſo was don the dede,
For in a bathe they gonne hire faſte ſhetten,
And night and day gret fire they under betten.
The longe night, and eke a day alſo,
For all the fire, and eke the bathes hete,
She ſate al cold, and felt of it no wo;
It made hire not a drope for to ſwete;
But in that bath hire lif ſhe muſte lete,
For he Almache with a ful wicke entent
To ſleen hire in the bath his ſonde ſent.
Three ſtrokes in the nekke he ſmote hire tho
The turmentour, but for no maner chance
He mighte not ſmite all hire nekke atwo:
And for ther was that time an ordinance
That no man ſhulde don man ſwiche penance
The fourthe ſtroke to ſmiten ſoft or ſore,
This turmentour ne dorſte do no more;
But half ded, with hire nekke ycorven thor
He left hire lie, and on his way is went:
The Criſten folk which that about hire were
With ſhetes han the blood ful faire yhent:
Three dayes lived ſhe in this turment,
And never ceſed hem the faith to teche,
That ſhe had foſtred hem ſhe gan to preche.
And hem ſhe yaf hire mebles and hire thing,
And to the Pope Urban betoke hem tho,
And ſaid, I axed this of heven King
To have reſpit three dayes and no mo,
To recommend to you or that I go
Thiſe ſoules, lo, and that I might do werche
Here of min houſe perpetuellich a cherche.
Seint Urban with his dekenes prively
The body fette, and buried it by night
Among his other ſeintes honeſtly.
Hire hous The Cherche of Seint Cecile hight;
Seint Urban halowed it as he wel might,
In which unto this day in noble wiſe
Men don to Criſt and to his ſeinte ſerviſe.

THE CHANONES YEMANNES PROLOGUE.

Whan that tolde was the lif of Seinte Cecile,
Er we had ridden fully five mile,
At Boughton-under-Blee us gan atake
A man that clothed was in clothes blake,
And undernethe he wered a white surplis.
His hakeney, which that was al pomelee gris,
So swatte that it wonder was to see;
It semed as he had priked miles three.
The horse eke that his Yeman rode upon
So swatte that unnethes might he gon:
About the peytrel stood the fome ful hie;
He was of fome as flecked as a pie.
A male tweifold on his croper lay,
It semed that he caried litel array;
Al light for sommer rode this worthy man.
And in my herte wondren I began
What that he was, til that I understode
How that his cloke was sowed to his hode,
For which whan I had long avised me
I demed him some chanon for to be.
His hat heng at his back doun by a las,
For he had ridden more than trot or pas;
He had ay priked like as he were wode.
A clote lefe he had laid under his hode
For swete, and for to kepe his hed fro hete:
But it was joye for to seen him swete;
His forehed dropped as a stillatorie
Were ful of plantaine or of paritorie.
And whan that he was come he gan to crie,
God save (quod he) this joly compagnie!
Fast have I priked (quod he) for your sake,
Because that I wolde you atake,
To riden in this mery compagnie.
His Yeman was eke ful of curtesie,
And saide, Sires, now in the morwe tide
Out of your hostelrie I saw you ride,
And warned here my lord and soverain,
Which that to riden with you is ful fain
For his disport; he loveth daliance.
Frend, for thy warning God yeve the good chance.
Than said our Hoste: certain it wolde seme
Thy lord were wise, and so I may wel deme;
He is ful joconde also dare I leye:
Can he ought tell a mery tale or tweie,
With which he gladen may this compagnie?
Who, Sire? my lord? Ye, Sire, withouten lie,
He can of mirth and eke of jolitee
Not but ynough; also, Sire, trusteth me
And ye him knew al so wel as do I
Ye wolden wondre how wel and craftily
He coude werke, and that in sondry wise:
He hath take on him many a gret emprise,
Which were ful harde for any that is here
To bring about but they of him it lere.
As homely as he rideth amonges you
If ye him knew it wold be for your prow:
Ye wolden not forgon his acquaintance
For mochel good, I dare lay in balance
All that I have in my possession.
He is a man of high discression;
I warne you wel he is a passing man.
Wel, quod our Hoste, I pray thee tell me than
Is he a clerk or non? Tell what he is.
Nay, he is greter than a clerk ywis,
Saide this Yeman, and in wordes fewe,
Hoste, of his craft somwhat I wol you shewe.
I say my lord can swiche a subtiltee,
(But all his craft ye moun not wete of me,
And somwhat help I yet to his werking)
That all the ground on which we ben riding,
Til that we come to Canterbury toun,
He coud al clene turnen up so doun,
And pave it all of silver and of gold.
And whan this Yeman had this tale ytolde
Unto our Hoste, he said *Benedicite!*
This thing is wonder mervaillous to me,
Sin that thy lord is of so high prudence,
Because of which men shulde him reverence,
That of his worship rekketh he so lite;
His overest sloppe it is not worth a mite,
As in effect, to him, so mote I go;
It is all baudy and to-tore also.
Why is thy lord so sluttish I thee preye,
And is of power better cloth to beye,
If that his dede acorded with thy speche!
Telle me that, and that I thee beseche.
Why? quod this Yeman, wherto axe ye me?
God helpe me so, for he shal never the:
(But I wol not avowen that I say,
And therfore kepe it secree I you pray)
He is to wise in faith, as I beleve:
Thing that is overdon it wol not preve
Aright, as clerkes sain; it is a vice;
Wherfore in that I hold him lewed and nice;
For whan a man hath overgret a wit
Ful oft him happeth to misusen it;

So doth my lord, and that me greveth fore:
God it amende; I can say now no more.
Therof no force, good Yeman, quod our Hoſt;
Sin of the conning of thy lord thou woſt
Telle how he doth, I pray thee hertily,
Sin that he is ſo crafty and ſo ſly.
Wher dwellen ye, if it to tellen be?
In the ſubarbes of a toun, quod he,
Lurking in hernes and in lanes blinde,
Wheras thiſe robbours and thiſe theves by kinde
Holden hir privee fereful reſidence,
As they that dare not ſhewen hir preſence;
So faren we, if I ſhal ſay the ſothe.
Yet, quod our Hoſte, let me talken to the;
Why art thou ſo diſcoloured of thy face?
Peter, quod he, God yeve it harde grace;
I am ſo uſed the hote fire to blow
That it hath changed my colour I trow;
I n'am not wont in no mirrour to prie,
But ſwinke ſore, and lerne to multiplie.
We blundren ever and poren in the fire,
And for all that we faille of our deſire;
For ever we lacken our concluſion.
To mochel folk we don illuſion,
And borwe gold be it a pound or two,
Or ten or twelve, or many ſommes mo,
And make hem wenen at the leſte wey
That of a pound we connen maken twey;
Yet it is falſe; and ay we han good hope
It for to don, and after it we grope:
But that ſcience is ſo fer us beforne,
We mowen not, although we had it ſworne,
It overtake, it flit away ſo faſt;
It wol us maken beggers at the laſt.
While this Yeman was thus in his talking
This chanon drow him nere and herd all thing
Which this Yeman ſpake, for ſuſpecion
Of mennes ſpeche ever had this chanon;
For Caton ſayth, that he that gilty is
Demeth all thing be ſpoken of him ywis:
That was the cauſe he gan ſo nigh him drawe
To his Yeman, to herken all his ſawe;
And thus he ſaide unto his Yemain tho:
Hold thou thy pees, and ſpeke no wordes mo,
For if thou do thou ſhalt it dere abie:
Thou ſclaundreſt me here in this compagnie,
And eke diſcovereſt that thou ſhuldeſt hide.
Ye, quod our Hoſte, tell on, what ſo betide;
Of all his thretening recke not a mite.
In faith, quod he, no more I do but lite.
And whan this chanon ſaw it wold not be
But his Yeman wold tell his privetee,
He fled away for veray ſorwe and ſhame.
A! quod the Yeman, here ſhal riſe a game;
All that I can anon I wol you telle,
Sin he is gon; the foule fend him quelle,
For never hereafter wol I with him mete
For penny ne for pound, I you behete.
He that me broughte firſt unto that game,
Er that he die ſorwe have he and ſhame,
For it is erneſt to me by my faith;
That fele I wel, what that any man ſaith;
And yet for all my ſmert and all my grief,
For all my ſorwe, labour, and meſchief,
I coude never leve it in no wiſe.
Now wolde God my wit mighte ſuffice
To tellen all that longeth to that art;
But natheles yet wol I tellen part:
Sin that my lord is gon I wol not ſpare:
Swiche thing as that I know I wol declare.

THE CHANONES YEMANNES TALE*.

With this chanon I dwelt have ſeven yere,
And of his ſcience am I never the nere;
All that I had I have yloſt therby,
And God wot ſo han many mo than I.
Ther I was wont to be right freſh and gay
Of clothing, and of other good array,
Now may I were an hoſe upon min hed;
And wher my colour was both freſh and red
Now is it wan and of a leden hewe;
(Who ſo it uſeth ſo ſhal he it rewe)
And of my ſwinke yet blered is min eye;
Lo which avantage is to multiplie!
That ſliding ſcience hath me made ſo bare
That I have no good wher that ever I fare;
And yet I am endetted ſo therby,
Of gold that I have borwed trewely,
That while I live I ſhal it quiten never;
Let every man beware by me for ever.
What maner man that caſteth him therto,
If he continue, I hold his thrift ydo;
So helpe me God, therby ſhal he nat winne,
But empte his purſe, and make his wittes thinne.

* A prieſt of London, more covetous than wiſe, is deceived by a chanon profeſſing the art of alchymye. *Urry.*

And whan he thurgh his madneſſe and folie,
Hath loſt his owen good thurgh jupartie,
Than he exciteth other folk therto,
To leſe hir good as he himſelf hath do,
For unto ſhrewes joye it is and eſe
To have hir ſelawes in peine and diſeſe.
Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk.
Of that no charge; I wol ſpeke of our werk.
Whan we be ther as we ſhuln exerciſe
Our elviſh craft we ſemen wonder wiſe,
Our termes ben ſo clergial and queinte.
I blow the fire till that myn herte feinte.
What ſhuld I tellen eche proportion
Of thinges whiche that we werchen upon,
As on five or ſix unces, may wel be,
Of ſilver, or ſom other quantitee?
And beſie me to tellen you the names,
As orpiment, brent bones, yren ſquames,
That into poudre grounden ben ful ſmal?
And in an erthen pot how put is al,
And ſalt yput in and alſo pepere,
Beforn thiſe poudres that I ſpeke of here,
And wel ycovered with a lampe of glas?
And of moche other thing which that ther was?
And of the pottes and glaſſes enguinting,
That of the aire might passen out no thing?
And of the eſy fire, and ſmert alſo,
Which that was made? and of the care and wo
That we had in our materes ſublíming,
And in amalgaming and calcening
Of quickſilver, ycleped Mercurie crude?
For all our ſleightes we can not conclude.
Our orpiment and ſublimed mercurie,
Our grounden litarge eke on the porphurie,
Of eche of thiſe of unces a certain
Not helpeth us; our labour is in vain.
Ne, neyther our ſpirites ascencioun,
Ne our materes that lien in fix adoun,
Mown in our werking nothing us availle,
For loſt is all our labour and travaille,
And all the coſt a twenty devil way
Is loſt alſo which we upon it lay.
Ther is alſo ful many another thing
That is unto our craft apperteining,
Though I by ordre hem nat reherſen can,
Becauſe that I am a lewed man,
Yet wol I telle hem as they come to minde,
Though I ne cannot ſet hem in hir kinde,
As bole armoniak, verdegreſe, boras,
And ſoudry veſſels made of erthe and glas,
Our urinales, and our deſcenſories,
Viols, croſſettes and ſublimatories,
Cucurbites and alembikes eke,
And other ſwiche ger, dere ynough a leke,
What nedeth it for to reherſe hem alle?
Wateres rubifying, and bolles galle,
Arſenik, ſal armoniak, and brimſton,
And herbes coude I tell eke many on,
As egremoine, valerian, and lunarie,
And other ſwiche, if that me liſt to tarie,
Our lampes breming bothe night and day,
To bring about our craft if that we may,
Our fourneis eke of calcination,
And of wateres albification,
Unſlekked lime, chalk, and gleire of an ey,
Poudres divers, aſhes, dong, piſſe, and cley,
Sered pokettes, ſal peter, and vitriole,
And divers fires made of wode and cole,
Sal tartre, alcaly, and ſalt preparat,
And combuſt materes and coagulat,
Cley made with hors and mannes here, and oile
Of tartre, alum, glas, berme, wort, and argoile,
Roſalgar, and other materes enbibing,
And eke of our materes encorporing,
And of our ſilver citrination,
Our cementing and fermentation,
Our ingottes, teſtes, and many thinges mo?
I wol you tell as was me taught alſo
The foure ſpirites and the bodies ſevene
By ordre, as oft I herd my lord hem nevene.
The firſte ſpirit Quickſilver cleped is,
The ſecond Orpiment, the thridde ywis
Sal Armoniak, and the fourth brimſton.
The bodies ſevene eke, lo hem here anon:
Sol gold is, and Luna ſilver we threpe,
Mars iren, Mercurie quickſilver we clepe,
Saturnus led, and Jupiter is tin,
And Venus coper, by my fader kin.
This curſed craft who ſo wol exerciſe
He ſhal no good have that him may ſuffice,
For all the good he ſpendeth theraboute
He leſen ſhal, therof have I no doute.
Who ſo that liſteth uttren his folie
Let him come forth and lernen multiplie;
And every man that hath ought in his cofre
Let him appere and wex a philoſophre,
Aſcaunce that craft is ſo light to lere.
Nay, nay, God wot al be he monk or frere,
Preeſt or chanon, or any other wight,
Though he ſit at his book both day and night
In lerning of this elviſh nice lore
All is in vain, and parde mochel more
To lerne a lewed man this ſubtiltee.
Fie! ſpeke not therof, for it wol not be:
And conne he letterure, or conne he non
As in effect he ſhal finde it all on,
For bothe by two my ſalvation
Concluden in multiplication
Ylike wel whan they have al ydo;
This is to ſain, they faillen bothe two.
Yet forgate I to maken reherſaile
Of waters coroſif and of limaile,
And of bodies molification,
And alſo of hir induration,
Oiles, ablufions, metal fuſible;
To telleñ all wold paſſen any Bible
That o wher is; wherfore as for the beſt
Of all thiſe names now wol I me reſt;
For as I trow I have you told ynow
To reiſe a fend, al loke he never ſo row.
A! nay, let be; the philoſophres ſton,
Elixer cleped, we ſeken faſt eche on,
For had we him than were we ſiker ynow;
But unto God of heven I make avow,
For all our craft, whan we han all ydo,
And all our ſleight, he wol not come us to:

He hath ymade us ſpenden mochel good,
For ſorwe of which almoſt we waxen wood,
But that good hope crepeth in our herte,
Suppoſing ever, though we ſore ſmerte,
To ben releved of him afterward:
Swiche ſuppoſing and hope is ſharp and hard:
I warne you wel it is to ſeken ever:
That future *temps* hath made men diſſever
In truſt therof from all that ever they had,
Yet of that art they conne not waxen ſad,
For unto hem it is a bitter ſwete:
So ſemeth it, for ne had they but a ſhete
Which that they might wrappen hem in a-night,
And a bratt to walken in by day-light,
They wold hem ſell, and ſpend it on this craft:
They conne not ſtinten til no thing be laft;
And evermore, wher ever that they gon,
Men may hem kennen by ſmell of brimſton:
For all the world they ſtinken as a gote;
Hir ſavour is ſo rammiſh and ſo hote
That though a man a mile from hem be
The ſavour wol enfect him, truſteth me.
Lo, thus by ſmelling and thred-bare array
If that men liſt this folk they knowen may;
And if a man wol axe hem prively
Why they be clothed ſo unthriftily,
They right anon wol rounen in his ere,
And ſaien, if that they eſpied were
Men wolde hem ſle becauſe of hir ſcience.
Lo, thus thiſe folk betraien innocence.
Faſſe over this; I go my Tale unto.
Er that the pot be on the fire ydo,
Of metals with a certain quantitee
My lord hem tempereth, and no man but he,
(Now he is gon I dare ſay boldely)
For as men ſain he can don craftily,
Algate I wote wel he hath ſwiche a name,
And yet ful oft he renneth in a blame;
And wete ye how? ful oft it falleth ſo
The pot to-breketh, and farewel! all is go.
Thiſe metales ben of ſo gret violence
Our walles may not make hem reſiſtence,
But if they weren wrought of lime and ſton;
They percen ſo that thurgh the wall they gon,
And ſom of hem ſinke doun into the ground,
(Thus have we loſt by times many a pound)
And ſom are ſcatered all the flore aboute,
Som lepen into the roof withouten doute.
Though that they fend not in our ſight him ſhewe
I trow that he be with us, thilke ſhrewe
In helle, wher that he is lord and ſire,
Ne is ther no more, rancour, ne ire.
Whan that our pot is broke, as I have ſayde,
Every man chit, and holt him evil apayde:
Som ſayd it was long on the fire-making,
Som ſayd nay, it was long on the blowing;
(Than was I ferd, for that was min office)
Straw! quod the thridde, ye ben lewed and nice;
It was not tempred as it oughte to be;
Nay, quod the fourthe, ſtinte and herken me;
Becauſe our fire was not made of beche
That is the cauſe, and other non, ſo the iche.
I can not tell wheron it was along,
But wel I wot gret ſtrif is us among.
What? quod my lord, ther n'is no more to don;
Of thiſe perils I wol beware eſtſone;
I am right ſiker that the pot was craſed.
Be as be may be ye no thing amaſed;
As uſage is let ſwepe the flore as ſwithe;
Plucke up your hertes, and be glad and blithe.
The mullek on an hepe yſweped was,
And on the flore ycaſt a canevas,
And all this mullok in a five ythrowe,
And ſifted, and ypicked many a throwe.
Parde, quod on, ſomwhat of our metall
Yet is ther here, though that we have not all;
And though this thing miſhaped hath as now
Another time it may be wel ynow.
We moſten put our good in aventure;
A marchant parde may not ay endure,
Truſteth me wel, in his proſperitee;
Somtime his good is drenched in the ſee,
And ſomtime cometh it ſauf unto the lond.
Peer, quod my lord, the next time I wol fond
To bring our craft all in another plite,
And but I do, Sires, let me have the wite:
Ther was defaute in ſomewhat wel I wote.
Another ſayd the fire was over hote:
But be it hote or cold I dare ſay this,
That we concluden evermore amis;
We faille alway of that which we wold have,
And in our madneſſe evermore we rave,
And whan we be together everich on
Every man ſemeth a Salomon.
But all thing which that ſhineth as the gold
Ne is no gold, as I have herd it told,
Ne every apple that is faire at eye
Ne is not good, what ſo men clap or crie,
Right ſo, lo, fareth it amonges us;
He that ſemeth the wiſeſt, by Jeſus
Is moſt fool whan it cometh to the preſe,
And he that ſemeth trueſt is a theſe:
That ſhal ye know or that I from you wende,
By that I of my Tale have made an ende.
Ther was a chanon of religioun
Amonges us wold enfect all a toun,
Though it as gret were as was Ninive,
Rome, Aliſaundre, Troie, or other three.
His ſleightes and his infinite falſeneſſe
Ther coude no man writen, as I geſſe,
Though that he mighte live a thouſand yere:
In all this world of falſeneſſe n'is his pere,
For in his termes he wol him ſo winde,
And ſpeke, his wordes in ſo ſlie a kinde,
Whan he comunen ſhal with any wight,
That he wol make him doten anon right
But it a fend be, as himſelven is.
Ful many a man hath he begiled er this,
And wol, if that he may live any while;
And yet men gon and riden many a mile
Him for to ſeke, and have his acquaintance,
Not knowing of his falſe governance;
And if you luſt to yeve me audience
I wol it tellen here in your preſence.
But, worſhipful chanons religious,
Ne demeth not that I ſclander your hous,
Although that my Tale of a chanon be:
Of every order ſom ſhrew is parde

And God forbede that all a compagnie
Shuld rewe a finguler mannes folie.
To ſclander you is no thing min entent,
But to correcten that is mis I ment.
This Tale was not only told for you
But eke for other mo: ye wot wel how
That among Criſtes apoſteles twelve
Ther was no traitour but Judas himſelve;
Than why ſhuld al the remenant have blame,
That giltles were? By you I ſay the ſame;
Save only this, if ye wol herken me,
If any Judas in your covent be
Remeveth him betimes I you rede,
If ſhame or los may cauſen any drede;
And be no thing diſpleſed I you pray,
But in this cas herkeneth what I ſay.

In London was a preeſt, an annuellere *,
That therin dwelled hadde many a yere,
Which was ſo pleſant and ſo ſerviſable
Unto the wif ther as he was at table,
That ſhe wold ſuffer him no thing to pay
For borde ne clothing, went he never ſo gay;
And ſpending ſilver had he right ynow:
Therof no force; I wol proceed as now,
And tellen forth my Tale of the chanon
That broughte this preeſt to confuſion.

This falſe chanon came upon a day
Unto the preeſtes chambre ther he lay,
Beſeching him to lene him a certain
Of gold, and he wold quite it him again.
Lene me a marke, quod he, but dayes three,
And at my day I wol it quiten thee;
And if it ſo be that thou finde me falſe
Another day hang me up by the halſe.

This preeſt him toke a marke, and that as ſwith,
And this chanon him thanked often ſith,
And toke his leve, and wente forth his wey;
And at the thridde day brought his money,
And to the preeſt he toke his gold again,
Wherof this preeſt was wonder glad and fain.

Certes, quod he, no thing anoieth me
To lene a man a noble, or two, or three,
Or what a thing were in my poſſeſſion,
Whan he ſo trewe is of condition
That in no wiſe he breken wol his day;
To ſwiche a man I can never ſay nay.

What? quod this chanon, ſhuld I be untrewe?
Nay, that were thing fallen al of the newe:
Trouth is a thing that I wol ever kepe
Unto the day in which that I ſhal crepe
Into my grave, and elles God forbede!
Beleveth this as liker as your crede,
God thanke I, and in good time be it ſayde,
That ther n'as never man yet evil apayde
For gold ne ſilver that he to me lent,
Ne never falſhede in min herte I ment.

And, Sire, (quod he) now of my privetee,
Sin ye ſo goodlich have ben unto me,
And kithed to me ſo gret gentilleſſe,
Somwhat to quiten with your kindeneſſe
I wol you ſhewe, and if you luſt to lere
I wol you techen pleinly the manere
How I can werken in philoſophie:
Taketh good heed, ye ſhuln wel ſen at eye
That I wol do a maiſtrie or I go.

Ye, quod the preeſt; ye, Sire, and wol ye ſo?
Mary, therof I pray you hertily.

At your commandement, Sire, trewely,
Quod the chanon, and elles God forbede.
Lo, how this theſe coude his ſervice bede
Ful ſoth it is that ſwiche profered ſervice
Stinketh, as witneſſen thiſe olde wiſe,
And that ful ſone I wol it verifie
In this chanon, rote of all trecherie,
That evermore delight hath and gladneſſe
(Swiche ſendly thoughtes in his herte empreſſe)
How Criſtes peple he may to meſchief bring:
God kepe us from his falſe diſſimuling!
Nought wiſte this preeſt with whom that he delt,
Ne of his harme coming nothing he felt.
O ſely preeſt! o ſely innocent!
With covetiſe anon thou ſhalt be blent;
O graceles! ful blind is thy conceite,
For nothing art thou ware of the diſceite
Which that this fox yſhapen hath to thee;
His wily wenches thou ne mayſt not flee:
Wherfore to go to the concluſion,
That referreth to thy confuſion,
Unhappy man! anon I wol me hie
To tellen thin unwit and thy folie,
And eke the falſeneſſe of that other wretch,
As ferforth as that my conning will ſtretch.

This chanon was my lord, ye wolden wene;
Sire Hoſte, in faith, and by the heven quene,
It was another chanon, and not he
That can an hundred part more ſubtiltee:
He hath betraied folkes many a time;
Of his falſeneſſe it dulleth me to rime:
Ever whan that I ſpeke of his falſhede
For ſhame of him my chekes waxen rede,
Algates they beginneth for to glowe,
For redneſſe have I noon, right wel I knowe,
In my viſage, for fumes diverſe
Of metals which ye have herd me reherſe
Conſumed han and waſted my redneſſe.
Now take hede of this chanons curſednеſſe.

Sire, quod the chanon, let your yeman gon
For quikſilver, that we it had anon,
And let him bringen unces two or three,
And whan he cometh as faſte ſhul ye ſee
A wonder thing, which ye ſaw never er this.

Sire, quod the preeſt, it ſhal be don ywis.
He bad his ſervant fetchen him this thing,
And he al redy was at his bidding,
And went him forth, and came anon again
With this quikſilver, ſhortly for to ſain,
And toke thiſe unces three to the chanoun,
And he hem laide wel and faire adoun,
And bad the ſervant coles for to bring,
That he anon might go to his werking.

The coles right anon weren yſet,
And this chanon toke out a croſſelet
Of his boſome, and ſhewed it to the preeſt.
This inſtrument, quod he, which that thou ſeeſt
Take in thyn hond, and put thyſelf therin
Of this quikſilver an unce, and here begin
In the name of Criſt to wex a philoſophre:
Ther be ful fewe which that I wolde profte

* They were called *annuellerets*, not from their receiving a yearly ſtipend, as the Gloſſ. explains it, but from their being employed ſolely in ſinging annuals or anniverſary maſſes for the dead, without any cure of ſouls.

To ſhewen hem thus muche of my ſcience;
For here ſhul ye ſee by experience
That this quikſilver I wol mortifie
Right in your ſight anon withouten lie,
And make it as good ſilver and as fine
As ther is any in your purſe or mine
Or elles wher, and make it malliable,
And elles holdeth me falſe and unable
Amonges folk for ever to appere.
I have a prouder here, that coſt me dere,
Shal make all good, for it is cauſe of all
My conning which that I you ſhewen ſhall.
Voideth your man, and let him be therout,
And ſhet the dore, while we ben about
Our privitee, that no man us eſpie
While that we werke in this philoſophie.
All as he bade fulfilled was in dede:
This ilke ſervant anon right out yede,
And his maiſter ſhette the dore anon,
And to hir labour ſpedily they gon.
This preeſt at this curſed chanons bidding
Upon the fire anon he ſet this thing,
And blew the fire, and beſied him ful faſt;
And this chanon into the croſſelet caſt
A pouder, n'ot I never wherof it was
Ymade, other of chalk, other of glas,
Or ſomwhat elles, was not worth a flie,
To blinden with this preeſt, and bade him hie
The coles for to couchen all above
The croſſelet, for in tokening I thee love
(Quod this chanon) thine owen hondes two
Shal werken all thing which that here is do.
Grand mercy, quod the preeſt, and was ful glad,
And couched the coles as the chanon bad;
And while he beſy was this ſendly wretch,
This falſe chanon, (the foule ſend him fetch)
Out of his boſom toke a bechen cole,
In which ful ſubtilly was made an hole,
And therin put was of ſilver limaile
An unce, and ſtopped was withouten faile
The hole with wax to keep the limaile in.
And underſtandeth that this falſe gin
Was not made ther, but it was made before;
And other thinges I ſhall tell you more
Hereafterward which that he with him brought;
Er he came ther him to begile he thought,
And ſo he did or that they went atwin;
Til he had torned him coud he not blin.
It dulleth me whan that I of him ſpeke;
On his falſhede fain wold I me awreke
If I wiſt how; but he is here and ther:
He is ſo variaunt he abit no wher.
But taketh hede, Sires, now, for Goddes love.
He toke his cole, of which I ſpake above,
And in his hond he bare it prively,
And whiles the preeſt couched beſily
The coles, as I tolde you er this,
This Chanon ſayde; Frend, ye don amis;
This is not couched as it ought to be,
But ſone I ſhal amenden it, quod he.
Now let me meddle therwith but a while,
For of you have I pitee by Seint Gile.
Ye ben right hot; I ſee wel how ye ſwete;
Have here a cloth and wipe away the wete.
And whiles that the preeſt wiped his face
This chanon toke his cole with ſory grace,
And laied it above on the midward
Of the croſſelet, and blew wel afterward,
Til that the coles gonnen faſt to bren.
Now yeve us drinke, quod this chanon, then,
As ſwithe all ſhall be wel I undertake:
Sitte we doun, and let us mery make.
And whanne that this chanones bechen cole
Wes brent all the limaile out of the hole
Into the croſſelet anon fell adoun;
And ſo it muſte nedes by reſoun,
Sin it above ſo even couched was,
But therof wiſt the preeſt nothing, alas!
He demed all the coles ylike good,
For of the ſleight he nothing underſtood.
And whan this alkymiſtre ſaw his time,
Riſeth up, Sire Preeſt, quod he, and ſtondeth by me,
And for I wote wel ingot have ye non,
Goth, walketh forth, and bringeth a chalk ſton,
For I wol make it of the ſame ſhap
That is an ingot, if I may have hap:
Bring eke with you a bolle or elles a panne
Ful of water, and ye ſhul wel ſee thanne
How that our beſineſſe ſhal thrive and preve:
And yet, for ye ſhul have no miſbeleve
Ne wrong conceit of me in your abſence,
I ne wol not ben out of your preſence,
But go with you, and come with you again.
The chambre door, ſhortly for to ſain,
They opened and ſhet, and went hir wey,
And forth with hem they caried the key,
And camen again withouten any delay.
What ſhuld I tarien all the longe day?
He toke the chalk, and ſhope it in the wiſe
Of an ingot, as I ſhal you deviſe;
I ſay he toke out of his owen ſleve
A teine of ſilver (yvel mote he cheve)
Which that ne was but a juſt unce of weight:
And taketh heed now of his curſed ſleight;
He ſhop his ingot in length and in brede
Of thilke teine, withouten any drede,
So ſlily that the preeſt it not eſpide,
And in his ſleve again it gan it hide,
And from the fire he toke up his matere,
And in the ingot it put with mery chere,
And in the water-veſſel he it caſt
Whan that him liſt, and bad the preeſt as faſt
Loke what ther is; put in thin hond and grope;
Thou ſhalt ther finden ſilver, as I hope.
What, divel of helle! ſhuld it elles be?
Shaving of ſilver, ſilver is parde.
He put his hond in and toke up a teine
Of ſilver fine, and glad in every veine
Was this preeſt whan he ſaw that it was ſo.
Goddes bleſſing, and his mothers alſo,
And alle Halwes, have ye, Sire Chanon!
Sayde this preeſt, and I hir maliſon,
But and ye vouchefauf to techen me
This noble craft and this ſubtilitee
I wol be your in alle that ever I may.
Quod the chanon, Yet wol I make aſſay
The ſecond time, that ye mow taken hede,
And ben expert of this, and in your nede
Another day aſſay in min abſence
This diſcipline and this crafty ſcience.
Let take another unce, quod he tho,
Of quikſilver, without en wordes mo,

And do therwith as ye have don er this
With that other which that now ſilver is.
The preeſt him beſieth all that ever he can
To don as this chanon, this curſed man,
Commandeth him, and faſte blewe the fire
For to come to the effect of his deſire;
And this chanon right in the mene while
Al redy was this preeſt eft to begile,
And for a countenance in his hond bare
An holow ſtikke, (take kepe and beware)
In the ende of which an unce and no more
Of ſilver limaile put was, as before
Was in his cole, and ſtopped with wax wel
For to kepe in his limaile every del;
And while this preeſt was in his beſineſſe
This chanon with his ſtikke gan him dreſſe
To him anon, and his pouder caſt in
As he did erſt, (the devil out of his ſkin
Him torne, I pray to God, for his falſhede,
For he was ever falſe in thought and dede)
And with his ſtikke above the croſſelet,
That was ordained with that falſe get,
He ſtirreth the coles til relenten gan
The wax again the fire, as every man
But he a fool be wote wel it mote nede,
And all that in the ſtikke was out yede,
And in the croſſelet haſtily it fell.
Now, goode Sires, what wol ye bet than wel?
Whan that this preeſt was thus begiled again,
Suppoſing nought but trouthe, ſoth to ſain,
He was ſo glad that I can not expreſſe
In no manere his mirth and his gladneſſe,
And to the chanon he profered eftſone
Body and good. Ye, quod the chanon, ſone,
Though poure I be, crafty thou ſhalt me finde:
Warne thee wel yet is ther mor behinde.
Is ther any coper here within? ſayd he?
Ye, Sire, quod the preeſt, I trow ther be.
Elles go beie us ſom, and that as ſwithe.
Now, goode Sire, go forth thy way and hie the.
He went his way, and with the coper he came
And this chanon it in his hondes name,
And of that coper weyed out an unce.
To ſimple is my tonge to pronounce,
As miniſter of my wit, the doubleneſſe
Of this chanon, rote of all curſedneſſe:
He ſemed frendly to hem that knew him nought,
But he was fendly both in werk and thought.
It werieth me to tell of his falſeneſſe,
And natheles yet wol I it expreſſe,
To that entent men may beware therby,
And for non other cauſe trewely.
He put this coper into the croſſelet,
And on the fire as ſwithe he hath it ſet,
And caſt in pouder, and made the preeſt to blow,
And in his werking for to ſtoupen low
As he did erſt, and all n'as but a jape;
Right as him lift the preeſt he made his ape;
And afterward in the ingot he it caſt,
And in the panne put it at the laſt
Of water, and in he put his owen hond:
And in his ſleve, as ye beforen hond
Herde me telle, he had a ſilver teine;
He ſlily toke it out, this curſed heine,
(Unweting this preeſt of his falſe craft)
And in the pannes bottom he it laſt,
And in the water rombleth to and fro,
And wonder prively toke up alſo
The coper teine, (not knowing thilke preeſt)
And hid it, and him hente by the breſt,
And to him ſpake, and thus ſaid in his game;
Stoupeth adoun; by God ye be to blame;
Helpeth me now, as I did you whilere;
Put in your hond, and loketh what is there.
This preeſt toke up this ſilver teine anon;
And thanne ſaid the chanon, Let us gon
With thiſe three teines which that we han wroughte
To ſom goldſmith, and wete if they ben ought,
For by my faith I n'olde for my hood
But if they weren ſilver fine and good,
And that as ſwithe wel preved ſhal it be.
Unto the goldſmith with thiſe teines three
They went anon, and put hem in aſſay
To fire and hammer: might no man ſay nay
But that they weren as hem ought to be.
This ſoted preeſt, who was gladder than he?
Was never brid gladder agains the day,
Ne nightingale in the ſeſon of May
Was never non that lift better to ſing,
Ne lady luſtier in carolling,
Or for to ſpeke of love and womanhede,
Ne knight in armes don a hardy dede
To ſtonden in grace of his lady dere,
Than hadde this preeſt this craft for to lere;
And to the chanon thus he ſpake and ſeid:
For the love of God that for us alle deid,
And as I may deſerve it unto you,
What ſhal this receit coſt? telleth me now.
By our Lady, quod this chanon, it is dere.
I warne you wel that ſave I and a frere
In Englelond ther can no man it make.
No force, quod he: now, Sire, for Goddes ſake
What ſhall I pay? telleth me I you pray.
Ywis, quod he, it is ful dere I ſay.
Sire, at o word, if that you liſt it have
Ye ſhal pay forty pound, ſo God me ſave;
And n'ere the frendſhip that ye did er this
To me ye ſhulden payen more ywis.
This preeſt the ſum of fourty pound anon
Of nobles fet, and toke hem everich on
To this chanon for this ilke receit.
All his werking n'as but fraud and deceit.
Sire Preeſt, he ſaid, I kepe for to have no loos
Of my craft, for I wold it were kept cloos,
And as ye love me kepeth it ſecree,
For if men knewen all my ſubtiltee,
By God they wolden have ſo gret envie
To me, becauſe of my philoſophie,
I ſhuld be ded, that were non other way.
God it forbede, quod the preeſt, what ye ſay?
Yet had I lever ſpenden all the good
Which that I have (and elles were I wood)
Than that ye ſhuld fallen in ſwiche miſchefe.
For your good will, Sire, have ye right good preſe,
Quod the chanon; and farewel, *grand mercy*.
He went his way, and never the preeſt him ſey
After that day. And whan that this preeſt ſhold
Maken aſſay, at ſwiche time as he wold,

Of this receit, farewel! it n'old not be.
Lo, thus bejaped and begiled was he;
Thus maketh he his introduction
To bringen folk to hir deſtruction.
Conſidereth, Sires, how that in eche eſtat
Betwixen men and gold ther is debat,
So ferforth that unnethes is ther non.
This multiplying ſo blint many on
That in good faith I trowe that it be
The cauſe greteſt of ſwiche ſcarſitee.
Thiſe philoſophres ſpeke ſo miſtily
In this craft that men cannot come therby
For any wit that men have now adayes:
They mow wel chateren as don thiſe jayes,
And in hir termes ſet hir luſt and peine,
But to hir purpos ſhul they never atteine.
A man may lightly lerne, if he have ought,
To multiplie and bring his good to nought.
Lo, ſwiche a lucre is in this luſty game
A mannes mirth it wol turne al to grame,
And emptien alſo gret and hevy purſes,
And maken folk for to purchaſen curſes
Of hem that han therto hir good ylent.
O, fy for ſhame! they that han be brent,
Alas! can they not flee the fires hete?
Ye that it uſe I rede that ye it lete,
Leſt ye leſe all; for bet than never is late:
Never to thriven were to long a date:
Though ye prolle ay ye ſhul it never find;
Ye ben as bold as is Bayard the blind,
That blondereth forth, and peril caſteth non;
He is as bold to renne agains a ſton
As for to go beſides in the way:
So farén ye that multiplien I ſay.
If that your eyen cannot ſeen arright
Loketh that youre mind lacke not his ſight,
For though ye loke never ſo brode, and ſtare,
Ye ſhuln not win a mite on that chaffare,
But waſten all that ye may rape and renne.
Withdraw the fire leſt it to faſte brenne;
Medleth no more with that art I mene,
For if ye don your thrift is gon ful clene:
And right as ſwithe I wol you tellen here
What philoſophres ſain in this matere.
Lo, thus ſaith Arnolde of the newe toun,
As his Roſarie maketh mentioun;
He ſaith right thus, withouten any lie,
Ther may no man Mercurie mortifie
But it be with his brothers knowleching.
Lo, how that he which firſte ſaid this thing
Of philoſophres father was, Hermes;
He ſaith how that the dragon douteles
Ne dieth not but if that he be ſlain
With his brother; and this is for to ſain
By the dragon Mercury and non other
He underſtood, and Brimſtone by his brother,
That out of Sole and Luna were ydrawe.
And therfor, ſaid he, Take heed to my ſawe:
Let no man beſie him this art to ſeche
But if that he the entention and ſpeche
Of philoſophres underſtonden can,
And if he do he is a lewed man;
For this ſcience and this conning (quod he)
Is of the ſecree of ſecrees parde.
Alſo ther was a diſciple of Plato
That on a time ſaid his maiſter to,
As his book Senior wol bere witneſſe,
And this was his demand in ſothfaſtneſſe,
Telle me the name of thilke prives ſton.
And Plato anſwerd unto him anon;
Take the ſton that Titanos men name.
Which is that? quod he. Magnetia is the ſame
Saide Plato. Ye, Sire, and is it thus?
This *Ignotum per ignotius*,
What is magnetia, good Sire, I pray?
It is a water that is made, I ſay,
Of the elementes foure, quod Plato.
Tell me the rote, good Sire, quod he tho,
Of that water, if that it be your will.
Nay, nay, quod Plato, certain that I n'ill:
The philoſophres were ſworne everich on
That they ne ſhuld diſcover it unto non,
Ne in no book it write in no manere,
For unto God it is ſo leſe and dere
That he wol not that it diſcovered be
But wher it liketh to his deitee
Man for to enſpire, and eke for to defende
Whom that him liketh; lo, this is the ende.
Than thus conclude I; ſin that God of hevene
Ne wol not that the philoſophres neven
How that a man ſhal come unto this ſton,
I rede as for the beſt to let it gon;
For who ſo maketh God his adverſary,
As for to werken any thing in contrary
Of his will, certes never ſhal he thrive,
Though that he multiply terme of his live.
And ther a point, for ended is my Tale.
God ſend every good man bote of his bale!

THE MANCIPLES PROLOGUE.

Were ye not wher ſtondeth a litel toun
Which that ycleped is Bob-up-and-doun,
Under the Blee in Canterbury way?
Ther gan our hoſte to jape and to play,
And ſayde; Sires, what? Dun is in the mire;
Is ther no man for praiere ne for hire
That wol awaken our felaw behind?
A theſe him might ful lightly rob and bind:
See how he nappeth, ſee, for cockes bones,
As he wold fallen from his hors atones.
Is that a coke of London, with meſchance?
Do him come forth, he knoweth his penance,
For he ſhal tell a Tale by my fey,
Although it be not worth a botel hey.
Awake, thou coke, quod he; God yeve the ſorwe,
What aileth thee to ſlepen by the morwe?
Haſt thou had fleen al night, or art thou dronke?
Or haſt thou with ſom quene al night yſwonke
So that thou mayſt not holden up thin hed?
This coke, that was ful pale and nothing red,
Sayd to our Hoſte; So God my ſoule bleſſe,
As ther is falle on me ſwiche hevineſſe,
N'ot I nat why, that me were lever to ſlepe
Than the beſt gallon wine that is in Chepe.
Wel, quod the Manciple, if it may don eſe
To thee, Sire Coke, and to no wight diſpleſe
Which that hire rideth in this compagnie,
And that our Hoſte wol of his curteſie;
I wol as now excuſe thee of thy Tale,
For in good faith thy viſage is ful pale:
Thin eyen daſen, ſothly as me thinketh,
And wel I wot thy breth ful ſoure ſtinketh,
That ſheweth wel thou art not wel diſpoſed:
Of me certain thou ſhalt not ben ygloſed.
See how he galpeth, lo, this dronken wight,
As though he wold us ſwalow anon right!
Hold cloſe thy mouth, man, by thy father kin;
The devil of helle ſet his foot therin,
Thy curſed breth enfecten wol us alle:
Fy, ſtinking ſwine! fy, foul mote thee befalle!
A! taketh heed, Sires, of this luſty man.
Now, ſwete Sire! wol ye juſt at the fan?
Therto me thinketh ye be wel yſhape:
I trow that ye have dronken win of ape,
And that is whan men playen with a ſtraw.
And with this ſpeche the coke waxed all wraw,
And on the Manciple he gan not faſt
For lacke of ſpeche, and doun his hors him caſt,
Wher as he lay til that men him up toke:
This was a faire chivachee of a coke:
Alas that he ne had hold him by his ladel!
And er that he agen were in the ſadel
Ther was gret ſhoving bothe to and fro
To lift him up, and mochel care and wo,
So unweldy was this ſely palled goſt;
And to the Manciple then ſpake our Hoſt.
Becauſe that drinke hath domination
Upon this man, by my ſalvation
I trowe he lewedly wol tell his Tale;
For wer it win or old or moiſty ale
That he hath dronke he ſpeketh in his noſe,
And ſneſeth faſt, and eke he hath the poſe;
He alſo hath to don more than ynough
To keep him on his capel out of the ſlough
And if he felle from of his capel eſtſone
Than ſhul we alle have ynough to done
In liftingup his hevy dronken cors.
Tell on thy Tale, of him make I no force.
But yet, Manciple, in faith thou art to nice
Thus openly to repreve him of his vice;
Another day he wol paraventure
Recleimen thee, and bring thee to the lure;
I mene he ſpeken wol of ſmale thinges,
As for to pinchen at thy rekeninges,
That were not honeſt if it came to preſe.
Quod the Manciple, That were a gret meſchefe;
So might he lightly bring me in the ſnare;
Yet had I lever payen for the mare
Which he writ on than he ſhuld with me ſtrive:
I wol not wrathen him, ſo mote I thrive:
That that I ſpake I ſayd it in my bourd
And wete ye what? I have here in my gourd
A draught of win, ye of a ripe grape,
And right anon ye ſhul ſeen a good jape;
This coke ſhal drinke therof if that I may;
Up peine of my lif he wol not ſay nay.
And certainly, to tellen as it was,
Of this veſſell the coke dranke faſt, (alas!
What nedeth it? he dranke ynough beforne)
And whan he hadde pouped in his horne
To the Manciple he toke the gourd again;
And of that drinke the coke was wonder fain,
And thonked him in ſwiche wiſe as he coude.
Than gan our Hoſte to laughen wonder loude
And ſayd; I ſee wel it is neceſſary
Wher that we gon good drinke with us to cary,

For that wol turnen rancour and diſeſe
To accord and love, and many a wrong apeſe
O Bacchus, Bacchus! bleſſed be thy name,
That ſo canſt turnen erneſt into game;
Worſhip and thonke be to thy deitee.
Of that matere ye get no more of me.
Tale on thy Tale, Manciple, I thee pray.
Wel, Sire, quod he, now herkeneth what I ſay.

THE MANCIPLES TALE *.

WHAN Phebus dwelled here in erth adoun,
As olde bookes maken mentioun,
He was the moſte luſty bacheler
Of all this world, and eke the beſt archer:
He ſlow Phiton the ſerpent as he lay
Sleping againſt the ſonne upon a day,
And many another noble worthy dede
He with his bow wrought, as men mowen rede.
Playen be coude on every minſtrakie,
And ſingen that it was a melodie
To heren of his clere vois the ſoun:
Certes the King of Thebes Amphioun,
That with his ſinging walled the citee,
Coud never ſingen half ſe wel as he.
Therto he was the ſemelieſte man
That is or was ſithen the world began.
What nedeth it his feture to deſcrive?
For in this world n'is non ſo faire on live;
He was therwith fulfilled of gentilleſſe,
Of honour, and of parfite worthineſſe.
This Phebus, that was floure of bachelerie,
As wel in fredom as in chivalrie,
For his diſport, in ſigne eke of victorie
Of Phiton, ſo as telleth us the ſtorie,
Was wont to beren in his hond a bowe.
Now had this Phebus in his hous a crowe.
Which in a cage he foſtred many a day,
And taught it ſpeken, as men teche a jay.
Whit was this crowe, as is a ſnow-whit ſwan,
And contrefete the ſpeche of every man
He coude whan he ſhulde tell a tale:
Therwith in all this world no nightingale
Ne coude by an hundred thouſand del
Singen ſo wonder merily and wel.
Now had this Phebus in his hous a wif
Which that he loved more than his lif,
And night and day did ever his diligence
Hire for to pleſs and don hire reverence;
Save only, if that I the ſoth ſhal ſain,
Jelous he was, and world have kept hire fain,
For him were loth yjaped for to be,
And ſo is every wight in ſwiche degree:
But all for nought, for it availeth nought.
A good wif, that is clene of werk and thought,
Shuld not be kept in non await certain;
And trewely the labour is in vain
To kepe a ſhrewe, for it wol not be.
This hold I for a veray nicetee
To ſpillen labour for to kepen wives;
Thus writen olde clerkes in hir lives.
But now to purpos as I firſt began.
This worthy Phebus doth all that he can
To pleſen hire, wening thurgh ſwiche pleſance,
And for his manhood and his governance,
That no man ſhulde put him from hire grace;
But God it wote ther may no man embrace
As to deſtreine a thing which that Nature
Hath naturelly ſet in a creature.
Take any brid and put it in a cage,
And do all thin entente and thy corage
To foſter it tendrely with mete and drinke
Of alle deintees that thou canſt bethinke,
And kepe it al ſo clenely as thou may,
Although the cage of gold be never ſo gay,
Yet had this brid by twenty thouſand fold
Lever in a foreſt that is wilde and cold
Gon eten wormes and ſwiche wretchedneſſe:
For ever this brid will don his beſineſſe
To eſcape out of his cage whan that he may:
His libertee the brid deſireth ay.
Let take a cat, and foſter hire with milke
And tendre fleſh, and make hire couche of ſilke,
And let hire ſee a mous go by the wall,
Anon ſhe weiveth milke and fleſh and all,
And every deintee that is in that hous,
Swiche appetit hath ſhe to ete the mous.
Lo, here hath kind hire domination,
And appetit fleméth diſcretion.
A ſhe-wolf hath alſo a vilains kind;
The lewedeſte wolf that ſhe may find,
Or leſt of reputation, wol ſhe take
In time whan hire loſt to have a make.
All thiſe enſamples ſpeke I by thiſe men
That ben untrewe, and nothing by women;

* Phoebus kepeth a white crow which can ſpeak as a jay. The crow accuſeth his wife, of whom he was too jealouſe, to have played falſe in his abſence; hereupon with an arrow he ſlayeth his wife but after repenting of his raſhneſs he taketh revenge of the crow. *Urry*.

For men have ever a likerous appetit
On lower thing to parforme hir delit
Than on hir wives, be they never ſo faire,
Ne never ſo trewe, ne ſo debonaire.
Fleſh is ſo newefangle, with meſchance,
That we ne con in nothing have pleſance
That ſouneth unto vertue any while.
This Phebus, which that thought upon no gile,
Diſceived was for all his jolitee,
For under him another hadde ſhe,
A man of litel reputation,
Nought worth to Phebus in compariſon:
The more harme is: it happeth often ſo,
Of which ther cometh mochel harme and wo.
And ſo befell whan Phebus was abſent
His wif anon hath for hire lemman ſent.
Hire lemman! certes that is a knaviſh ſpeche;
Forgeve it me, and that I you beſeche;
The wife Plato ſayth, as ye mow rede,
The word muſt nede accorden wit the dede:
If men ſhul tellen proprely a thing
The word muſt coſin be to the werking.
I am a boiſtous man, right thus ſay I;
Ther is no difference trewely
Betwixt a wif that is of high degree
(If of hire body diſhoneſt ſhe be)
And any poure wenche, other than this,
(If it ſo be they werken both amis)
But for the gentil is in eſtat above
She ſhal be cleped his Lady and his Love,
And for that other is a poure woman
She ſhal be cleped his Wenche and his Lemman;
And God it wote, mine owen dere brother!
Men lay as low that on as lith that other.
Right ſo betwixt a titleles tiraunt
And an outlawe, or elles a theſe erraunt,
The ſame I ſay; ther is no difference,
(To Alexander told was this ſentence)
But for the tyrant is of greter might
By force of meine for to ſle doun right,
And brennen hous and hom, and make all plain,
Lo, therfore is he cleped a Capitain;
And for the outlawe hath but ſmale meine,
And may not do ſo gret an harme as he,
Ne bring a contree to ſo gret meſchiefe.
Men clepen him an Outlawe or a Theſe.
But for I am a man not textuel
I wol not tell of textes never a del;
I wol go to my Tale as I began.
Whan Phebus wif had ſent for hire lemman
Anon they wroughten all hir luſt volage.
This white crowe, that heng ay in the cage,
Beheld hir werke, and ſayde never a word;
And whan that home was come Phebus the lord
This crowe ſong Cuckow, cuckow, cuckow!
What? brid, quod Phebus, what ſong ſingeſt thou now?
Ne were thou wont ſo merily to ſing,
That to my herte it was a rejoyſing
To here thy vois? Alas! what ſong is this!
By God, quod he, I ſinge not amis.
Phebus, (quod he) for all thy worthineſſe,
For all thy beautee and all thy gentilleſſe,
For all thy ſong and all thy minſtralcie,
For all thy waiting, blered is thin eye
With on of litel reputation,
Not worth to thee as in compariſon
The mountance of a gnat, ſo mote I thrive,
For on thy bedde thy wif I ſaw him ſwive.
What wol you more? the crowe anon him told,
By ſade tokenes and by wordes bold,
How that his wif had don hire lecherie
Him to gret ſhame and to gret vilanie,
And told him oft he ſawe it with his eyen.
This Phebus gan awayward for to wrien;
Him thought his woful herte braſt atwo;
His bowe he bent, and ſet therin a flo,
And in his ire he hath his wif yſlain:
This is the effect, ther is no more to ſain;
For ſorwe of which he brake his minſtralcie,
Both harpe and lute, giterne and ſautrie,
And eke he brake his arwes and his bowe,
And after that thus ſpake he to the crowe:
Traitour, quod he, with tonge of ſcorpion
Thou haſt me brought to my confuſion:
Alas that I was wrought! why n'ere I dede?
O dere wif, o gemme of luſtyhede!
That were to me ſo ſade and eke ſo trewe,
Now lieſt thou ded, with face pale of hewe,
Ful gilteles, that durſt I ſwere ywis.
O rakel hond! to do ſo foule a mis:
O troubled wit, o ire reccheles!
That unadviſed ſmiteſt gliteles:
O wantruſt! ful of falſe ſuſpecion,
Wher was thy wit and thy diſcretion?
O! every man beware of rakelneſſe,
Ne trowe no thing withouten ſtrong witneſſe;
Smite not to ſone er that ye weten why,
And beth aviſed wel and ſikerly
Or ye do any execution
Upon your ire for ſuſpecion.
Alas! a thouſand folk hath rakel ire
Fully fordon, and brought hem in the mire.
Alas! for ſorwe I wol myſelven ſle.
And to the crowe, O falſe theſe! ſaid he,
I wol thee quite anon thy falſe tale;
Thou ſong whilom like any nightingale,
Now ſhalt thou, falſe theſe, thy ſong forgon,
And eke thy white fethers everich on,
Ne never in all thy lif ne ſhalt thou ſpeke;
Thus ſhul men on a traitour ben awreke.
Thou and thin offspring ever ſhul be blake,
Ne never ſwete noiſe ſhul ye make,
But ever crie ageins tempeſt and rain,
In token that thurgh thee my wif is ſlain.
And to the crowe he ſtert, and that anon,
And pulled his white fethers everich on,
And made him blak, and raft him all his ſong
And eke his ſpeche, and out at dore him flong
Unto the devil, which I him betake;
And for this cauſe ben alle crowes blake.
Lordings, by this enſample I you pray
Beth ware, and taketh kepe what that ye ſay,
Ne telleth never man in all your lif
How that another man hath dight his wif;
He wol you haten mortally certain.
Dan Salomon, as wiſe clerkes ſain,
Techeth a man to kepe his tonge wel;
But, as I ſayd, I am no textuel;

But natheles thus taughte me my dame;
My ſone, thinke on the crowe a Goddes name:
My ſone, kepe wel thy tonge, and kepe thy frend;
A wicked tonge is worſe than a fend:
My ſone, from a fende men may hem bleſſe:
My ſone, God of his endeles goodneſſe
Walled a tonge with teeth, and lippes eke,
For man ſhuld him aviſen what he ſpeke:
My ſone, ful often for to mochel ſpeche
Hath many a man ben ſpilt, as clerkes teche,
But for a litel ſpeche aviſedly
Is no man ſhent, to ſpeken generally:
My ſone, thy tonge ſhuldeſt thou reſtreine
At alle time, but whan thou doſt thy peine
To ſpeke of God in honour and prayere:
The firſte vertue, ſone, if thou wolt lere,
Is to reſtraine and kepen wel thy tonge;
Thus leren children whan that they be yonge:
My ſone, of mochel ſpeking evil aviſed,
Ther leſſe ſpeking had ynough ſuffiſed,
Cometh mochel harme: thus was me told and taught,
In mochel ſpeche ſinne wanteth naught.
Woſt thou wherof a rakel tonge ſerveth?
Right as a ſwerd forcutteth and forkerveth
An arme atwo, my dere ſone! right ſo
A tonge cutteth frendſhip all atwo:
A jangler is to God abhominable:
Rede Salomon, ſo wiſe and honourable,
Rede David in his Pſalmes, rede Senek.
My ſone, ſpeke not but with thyn hed thou beck;
Diſſimule as thou were deſe if that thou here
A janglour ſpeke of perilous matere.
The Fleming ſayth, and lerne if that thee leſt,
That litel jangling cauſeth mochel reſt.
My ſone, if thou no wicked word haſt ſaid
Thee thar not dreden for to be bewraid;
But he that hath miſſayd, I dare wel ſain,
He may by no way clepe his word again.
Thing that is ſayd is ſayd, and forth it goth;
Though him repent, or be him never ſo loth,
He is his thral to whom that he hath ſayd
A tale of which he is now evil apaid.
My ſone, beware, and be non auctour newe
Of tidings whether they ben falſe or trewe:
Wher ſo thou come, amonges high or lowe,
Kepe wel thy tonge, and thinke upon the crowe.

THE PERSONES PROLOGUE.

By that the Manciple had his tale ended
The ſonne fro the ſouth line was deſcended
So lowe, that it ne was not to my ſight
Degrees nine-and-twenty as of hight.
Foure of the clok it was tho, as I geſſe,
For eleven foot, a litel more or leſſe,
My ſhadow was at thilke time as there,
Of ſwiche feet as my lengthe parted were
In ſix feet equal of proportion;
Therwith the mones exaltation,
I mene Libra, alway gan aſcende
As we were entring at the thorpes ende;
For which our Hoſte, as he was wont to gie
As in this cas our jolly compagnie,
Said in this wiſe; Lordings everich on,
Now lacketh us no Tales mo than on:
Fulfilled is my ſentence and my decree;
I trowe that we han herd of eche degree:
Almoſt fulfilled in myn ordinance;
I pray to God ſo yeve him right good chance
That telleth us this Tale luſtily.
Sire Preeſt, quod he, art thou a vicary,
Or art thou a Perſon? ſay ſoth by thy fay.
Be what thou be ne breke thou not our play,
For every man ſave thou hath told his Tale.
Unbokel and ſhew us what is in thy male;
For trewely me thinketh by thy chere
Thou ſhuldeſt knitte up wel a gret matere.
Tell us a fable anon, for cockes bones.
This Perſon him anſwerd al at ones;
Thou getteſt fable non ytold for me,
For Poule, that writeth unto Timothe,
Repreveth hem that weiven ſothfaſtneſſe,
And tellen fables and ſwiche wretchedneſſe.
Why ſhuld I ſowen draf out of my fiſt
When I may fowen whete if that me liſt?
For which I ſay, if that you liſt to here
Moralitee and vertuous matere,
And than that ye wol yeve me audience,
I wold ful fain at Criſtes reverence
Don you pleſance leful, as I can;
But truſteth wel I am a ſotherne man;
I cannot geſte, rom, ram, ruf, by my letter,
And, God wote, rime hold I but litel better:
And therfore if you liſt, I wol not gloſe,
I wol you tell a litel Tale in proſe
To knitte up all this feſte and make an ende;
And Jeſu for his grace wit me ſende
To ſhewen you the way in this viage
Of thilke parfit glorious pilgrimage
That hight Jeruſalem celeſtial:
And if ye vouchefauf anon I ſhal
Beginne upon my Tale, for which I pray
Tell your avis: I can no better ſay.
But natheles this meditation.
I put it ay under correction
Of clerkes, for I am not textuel:
I take but the ſentence, truſteth me wel:
Therfore I make a proteſtation
That I wol ſtanden to correction.
Upon this word we han aſſented ſone;
For as us ſemed it was for to done,
To enden in ſom vertuous ſentence,
And for to yeve him ſpace and audience,
And bade our Hoſte he ſhulde to him ſay
That alle we to tell his Tale him pray.
Our Hoſte had the wordes for us alle:
Sire Preeſt, quod he, now faire you befalle;
Say what you liſt, and we ſhul gladly here.
And with that word he ſaid in this manere;
Telleth, quod he, your meditation,
But haſteth you, the ſonne wol adoun:
Beth fructuous, and that in litel ſpace,
And to do wel God ſende you his grace.

THE PERSONES TALE*.

Our ſwete Lord God of heven, that no man wol periſh, but wol that we comen all to the knowleching of him, and to the blisful lif that is pardurable, amonesteth us by the prophet Jeremie, that ſayth in this wiſe, Stondeth upon the wayes, and ſeeth, and axeth of the olde pathes, that is to ſay, of olde ſentences, which is the good way, and walketh in that way, and ye ſhul finde refreſhing for your ſoules. Many ben the wayes ſpirituel that leden folk to our Lord Jeſu Criſt, and to the regne of glory; of which wayes ther is a ful noble way, and wel covenable, which may not faille to man, ne to woman that thurgh ſinne hath miſgon fro the right way of Jeruſalem celeſtial, and this way is cleped Penance, of which man ſhuld gladly herken and enqueren with all his herte, to wete what is penance, and whennes it is cleped penance, and how many maneres ben of actions or werkings of penance, and how many ſpices ther ben of penance, and which thinges apperteinen and behoven to penance, and which thinges diſtroublen penance.

Seint Ambroſe ſayth, that penance is the plaining of man for the gilt that he hath don, and no more to do any thing for which him ought to plaine; and ſom doctour ſayth, Penance is the waymenting of man that ſorweth for his ſinne, and peineth himſelf for he hath miſdon. Penance with certain circumſtances is veray repentance of man, that holdeth himſelf in ſorwe and other peine for his giltes; and for he ſhal be veray penitent he ſhal firſt bewailen the ſinnes that he hath don, and ſtedfaſtly purpoſen in his herte to have ſhrift of mouth, and to don ſatisfaction, and never to don thing for which him ought more to bewayle or complaine, and to continue in good werkes, or elles his repentance may not availe: for, as Seint Iſidor ſayth, He is a japer and a gabber, and not veray repentant, that eftſones doth thing for which him oweth to repent. Weping, and not for to ſtint to do ſinne, may not availe. But natheles men ſhuld hope that at every time that man falleth, be it never ſo oft, that he may ariſe thurgh penance, if he have grace; but certain it is gret doute; for, as ſaith Seint Gregorie, Unnethes ariſeth he out of ſinne that is charged with the charge of evil uſage: and therfore repentant folk, that ſtint for to ſinne, and forlete ſinne or that ſinne forlete hem, holy chirche holdeth hem ſiker of hir ſalvation: and he that ſinneth and verailly repenteth him in his laſt day, holy chirche yet hopeth his ſalvation, by the grete mercy of our Lord Jeſu Criſt, for his repentance: but take ye the ſiker and certain way.

And now, ſith I have declared you what thing is penance; now ye ſhul underſtond that ther ben three actions of penance. The firſt is, that a man be baptiſed after that he hath ſinned. Seint Auguſtine ſayth, But he be penitent for his old ſinful lif, he may not beginne the newe clene lif; for certes, if he be baptiſed without penitence of his old gilt, he receiveth the marke of baptiſme, but not the grace, ne the remiſſion of his ſinnes, til he have very repentance. Another defaut is, that men don dedly ſinne after that they have received baptiſme. The thridde defaute is, that men fall in venial ſinnes after hir baptiſme fro day to day: therof ſayth Seint Auguſtin, that penance of good and humble folk is the penance of every day.

The ſpices of penance ben three. That on of hem is ſolempne, another is commune, and the thridde privee. Thilke penance that is ſolempne is in two maneres, as to be put out of holy chirche in lenton, for ſlaughter of children, and ſwiche maner thing: another is, whan a man hath ſinned openly, of which ſinne the fame is openly ſpoken in the contree, and than holy chirche by jugement diſtreyneth him for to do open penance: commun penance is that preeſtes enjoinen men in certain cas, as for to go paraventure naked on pilgrimage or bare foot: privee penance is thilke that men don all day for privee ſinnes, of which we ſhrive us prively, and receive privee penance.

Now ſhalt thou underſtond what is behoveful and neceſſary to every parfit penance; and this ſtont on three thinges, contrition of herte, confeſſion of mouth, and ſatisfaction; for which ſayth Seint John Chriſoſtome, Penance diſtreineth a man to accept benignely every peine that him is enjoined with contrition of herte, and ſhrift of mouth, with ſatisfaction, and werking of all maner humilitee. And this is fruitful penance ayenſt tho three thinges in which we wrathen our Lord Jeſu Criſt; this is to ſay, by delit in thinking, by reche-

* *Jerem.* vi.; "State ſuper vias, et videte, et interrogate de ſemitis antiquis, quae ſit via bona, et ambulate in ea: et invenietis refrigerium animabus veſtris." *Tirry.*

leſneſſe in ſpeking, and by wicked ſinful werking: and ayenſt thiſe wicked giltes is penance, that may be likened unto a tree.

The rote of this tree is contrition, that hideth him in the herte of him that is veray repentant, right as the rote of the tree hideth him in the erthe. Of this rote of contrition ſpringeth a ſtalke that bereth branches and leves of confeſſion, and fruit of ſatisfaction; of which Criſt ſayth in his Goſpell, Doth ye digne fruit of penitence, for by this fruit mow men underſtonde and knowe this tree, and not by the rote that is hid in the herte of man, ne by the branches, ne the leves of confeſſion: and therfore our Lord Jeſu Criſt ſaith thus, By the fruit of hem ſhal ye knowe hem. Of this rote alſo ſpringeth a ſeed of grace, which ſeed is moder of ſikerneſſe, and this ſeed is eger and hote. The grace of this ſeed ſpringeth of God, thurgh remembrance on the day of dome and on the peines of helle. Of this matere ſayth Salomon, that in the drede of God man forletteth his ſinne. The hete of this ſede is the love of God, and the deſiring of the joye perdurable. This hete draweth the herte of man to God, and doth him hate his ſinne; for ſothly ther is nothing that ſavoureth ſo ſote to a child as the milke of his norice, ne nothing is to him more abhominable than that milke whan it is medled with other mete. Right ſo the ſinful man that loveth his ſinne, him ſemeth that it is to him moſt ſwete of any thing, but fro that time that he loveth ſadly our Lord Jeſu Criſt, and deſireth the lifperdurable, ther is to him nothing more abhominable; for ſothly the lawe of God is the love of God: for which David the prophet ſayth, I have loved thy lawe, and hated wickedneſſe: he that loveth God kepeth his lawe and his word. This tree ſaw the prophet Daniel in ſpirit upon the viſion of Nabuchodonoſor, whan he conſeilled him to do penance. Penance is the tree of lif to hem that it receiven; and he that holdeth him in veray penance is bliſsful, after the ſentence of Salomon.

In this penance or contrition, man ſhal underſtond foure thinges; that is to ſay, what is contrition, and which ben the cauſes that moven a man to contrition, and how he ſhuld be contrite, and what contrition availeth to the ſoule. Than is it thus, that contrition is the veray ſorwe that a man receiveth in his herte for his ſinnes, with ſad purpos to ſhriven him, and to do penance, and never more to don ſinne. And this ſorwe ſhal be in this maner, as ſayth Seint Bernard; it ſhal ben hevy and grevous, and ful ſharp and poinant in herte; firſt, for a man hath agilted his Lord and his creatour, and more ſharpe and poinant, for he hath agilted his father celeſtial, and yet more ſharpe and poinant, for he hath wratthed and agilted him that boughte him, that with his precious blod hath delivered us fro the bondes of ſinne, and fro the crueltee of the devil, and fro the peines of helle.

The cauſes that ought to meve a man to contrition ben ſixe. Firſt, a man ſhal remembre him of his ſinnes; but loke that that remembrance ne be to him no delit by no way, but grete ſhame and ſorwe for his ſinnes; for Job ſayth, Sinful men don werkes worthy of confeſſion; and therefore ſayth Ezechiel, I wol remembre me all the yeres of my lif in the bitterneſſe of my herte: and God ſayth in the Apocalipſe, Remembre you fro whens that ye ben fall, for before the time that ye ſinned, ye weren children of God, and limmes of the regne of God; but for your ſinne ye ben waxen thral, and foule membres of the fende, hate of angels, ſclaunder of holy chirche, and fode of the falſe ſerpent, perpetuel matere of the fire of helle, and yet more foule and abhominable for ye treſpaſſen ſo oft times as doth the hound that torneth again to ete his own ſpewing, and yet fouler for your long continuing in ſinne, and your ſinful uſage, for which ye be roten in your ſinnes as a beeſt in his donge. Swiche manere thoughtes make a man to have ſhame of his ſinne and no delit, as God ſayth by the prophet Ezechiel, Ye ſhul remembre you of your wayes, and they ſhul diſpleſe you. Sothly ſinnes ben the waies that lede ſolk to hell.

The ſecond cauſe that ought to make a man to have diſdeigne of ſinne is this, that, as ſaith Seint Peter, Who ſo doth ſinne is thral to ſinne, and ſinne putteth a man in gret thraldom, and therfore ſayth the prophet Ezechiel, I went ſorweful, and had diſdeigne of myſelf. Certes wel ought a man have diſdeigne of ſinne, and withdraw him fro that thraldom and vilany. And lo, what ſayth Seneke in this mater? He ſaith thus, Though I wiſt that neither God ne man ſhuld never know it, yet wold I have diſdeigne for to do ſinne. And the ſame Seneke alſo ſayth, I am borne to greter thinges than to be thral to my body, or for to make of my body a thral. Ne a fouler thral may no man ne woman make of his body than for to yeve his body to ſinne: al were it the fouleſt chorle or the fouleſt woman that liveth, and leſt of value, yet is he than more foule and more in ſervitude. Ever fro the higher degree that man falleth, the more is he thral, and more to God and to the world vile and abhominable. O good God! wel ought a man have diſdeigne of ſinne, ſith that thurgh ſinne ther he was free he is made bond: and therfore ſayth Seint Auguſtine, If thou haſt diſdeigne of thy ſervant, if he offend or ſinne, have thou than diſdeigne that thou thy ſelf ſhuldeſt do ſinne. Take reward of their owen value that thou ne be to ſoule to thyſelf. Alas! wel oughten they than have diſdeigne to be ſervants and thralles to ſinne, and ſore to be aſhamed of hemſelf, that God of his endles goodneſſe hath ſette in high eſtat, or yeve hem witte, ſtrength of body, hele, beautee, or proſperitee, and bought hem fro the deth with his herte blood, that they ſo unkindly agains his gentilleſſe quiten him ſo vilainſly, to ſlaughter of hir owen ſoules, O good God! ye women that ben of gret beautee, remembreth you on the proverbe of Salomon, that likeneth a faire woman that is a fool of hire body, to a ring of gold that is worne in the groine of a ſowe; for right as a ſowe wroteth in every ordure, ſo wroteth ſhe hire beautee in ſtinking ordure of ſinne.

The thridde cauſe that ought to meve a man to contrition, is drede of the day of dome, and of the

horrible peines of helle; for, as Seint Jerome ſayth, At every time that me remembreth of the day of dome I quake; for whan I ete or drinke, or do what ſo I do, ever ſemeth me that the trompe ſowneth in min eres, Riſeth ye up that ben ded, and cometh to the jugement. O good God! moche ought a man to drede ſwiche a jugement, ther as we ſhul be alle, as Seint Poule ſayth, before the ſtreit jugement of oure Lord Jeſu Criſt, wheras he ſhal make a general congregation, wheras no man may be abſent; for certes, ther availeth non eſſoine, ne non excuſation; and not only that our defautes ſhul be juged, but eke that all our werkes ſhul openly be knowen. And, as ſayth Seint Bernard, Ther ne ſhal no pleting availe, ne no ſleight: we ſhal yeve rekening of everich idle word: ther ſhal we have a juge that may not be deceived, ne corrupt: and why? for certes all our thoughtes ben diſcovered as to him: ne for prayer, ne for mede he wil not be corrupt; and therfore ſaith Salomon, The wrath of God ne wol not ſpare no wight for prayer, ne for yeſt; and therfore at the day of dome ther is non hope to eſcape; wherfore, as ſayth Seint Anſelme, Ful gret anguiſh ſhal the ſinful folk have at that time: ther ſhal be the ſterne and wroth juge ſitting above, and under him the horrible pitte of helle open, to deſtroye him that wolde not be knowen his ſinnes, which ſinnes ſhullen openly be ſhewed before God and before every creature; and on the left ſide mo divels than any herte may thinke for to hary and drawe the ſinful ſoules to the pitte of helle; and within the hertes of folk ſhal be the biting conſcience, and without forth ſhal be the world all brenning. Whither than ſhal the wretched ſoule flee to hide him? Certes he may not hide him, he muſt come forth and ſhewe him; for certes, as ſaith Seint Jerome, the erth ſhal caſt him out of it, and the ſee, and alſo the aire; that ſhal be ful of thonder clappes and lightnings. Now ſothly, who ſo wil remembre him of theſe thinges I geſſe that his ſinnes ſhal not torne him to delit, but to grete ſorwe for drede of the peine of helle; and therfore ſaith Job to God, Suffer, Lord, that I may a while bewaile and bewepe or I go without retorning to the derke lond ycovered with the derkeneſſe of deth to the lond of miſeſe and of derkeneſſe, wheras is the ſhadow of deth, wheras is non ordre ne ordinance, but griſly drede, that ever ſhal laſt. Lo, here may ye ſee that Job prayed reſpite awhile to bewepe and waile his treſpas, for ſothely on day of reſpite is better than all the treſour of this world: and for as moche as a man may acquite himſelf before God by penitence in this world, and not by treſour, therfore ſhuld he pray to God to yeve him reſpite a while to bewepen and bewailen his treſpas; for certes, all the ſorwe that a man might make fro the beginning of the world, n'is but a litel thing at regard of the ſorwe of helle. The cauſe why that Job clepeth helle the lond of derkneſſe, underſtondeth that he clepeth it londe or erth, for it is ſtable and never ſhal faile, and derke, for he that is in helle hath defaute of light naturel; for certes the derke light that ſhal come out of the fire that ever ſhall brenne ſhall torne hem all to peine that be in helle, for it ſheweth hem the horrible divels that hem tormenten covered with the derkeneſſe of deth; that is to ſay, that he that is in helle ſhal have defaute of the ſight of God, for certes the ſight of God is the lif perdurable. The derkneſſe of deth ben the ſinnes that the wretched man hath don, which that diſtroublen him to ſee the face of God, right as a derke cloud betwene us and the ſonne: it is londe of miſeſe, becauſe that ther ben three maner of defautes ayenſt three thinges that folk of this world han in this preſent lif, that is to ſay, honoures, delites, and richeſſes. Ayenſt honour have they in helle ſhame and confuſion, for wel ye wote that men clepen honour the reverence that man doth to man, but in helle is non honour, ne reverence, for certes no more reverence ſhal be don ther to a king than to a knave; for which God ſaith by the prophet Jeremie, The folk that me deſpiſen ſhal be in deſpite. Honour is alſo cleped gret lordeſhip: ther ſhal no wight ſerven other but of harme and turment. Honour is alſo cleped gret dignitee and highneſſe; but in helle ſhal they be alle fortroden of divels: as God ſayth, The horrible divels ſhul gon and comen upon the hedes of dampned folk; and this is, for as moche as the higher that they were in this preſent lif the more ſhul they be abated and defouled in helle. Ayenſt the richeſſe of this world ſhul they have miſeſe of poverte, and this poverte ſhall be in foure thinges, in defaute of treſour, of which David ſayth, The riche folk, that enbraceden and oneden all hir herte to treſour of this world, ſhul ſlepe in the ſleping of deth, and nothing ne ſhul they find in hir hondes of all hir treſour. And moreover, the miſeſe of helle ſhall be in defaute of mete and drink; for God ſayth thus by Moyſes, They ſhul be waſted with honger, and the briddes of helle ſhul devoure hem with bitter deth, and the gall of the dragon ſhal ben hir drinke, and the venime of the dragon hir morſels. And further over hir miſeſe ſhal be in defaute of clothing, for they ſhul be naked in body as of clothing, ſave the fire in which they brenne, and other filthes; and naked ſhul they be in ſoule, of all maner vertues which that is the clothing of the ſoule. Wher ben than the gay robes, the ſoft ſhetes, and the fyn ſhertes? Lo, what ſayth God of heven by the prophet Eſaie? that under hem ſhul be ſtrewed mothes, and hir covertures ſhul ben of wormes of helle. And further over, hir miſeſe ſhal be in defaute of frendes, for he is not poure that hath good frendes: but ther is no frend, for neither God, ne no good creature ſhal be frend to hem, and everich of hem ſhal hate other with dedly hate. The ſonnes and the doughters ſhal rebel ayenſt father and mother, and kinred ayenſt kinred, and chiden and deſpiſen eche other both day and night, as God ſayth by the prophet Micheas; and the loving children, that whilom loveden ſo fleſhly, everich of hem wold eten other if they might: for how ſhuld they love togeder in the peines of helle whan they hated eche other in the proſperitee of this lif? for truſte wel hir fleſhly love was dedly hate; as ſaith

the prophet David, Who ſo that loveth wickedneſſe he hateth his owen ſoule, and who ſo hateth his own ſoule certes he may love non other wight in no manere; and therefore in helle is no ſolace, ne no frendſhip, but ever the more kinredes that ben in helle, the more curſing, the more chiding, and the more dedly hate, ther is among hem. And further over, ther they ſhul have defaute of all maner delites, for certes delites ben after the appetites of the five wittes, as ſight, hering, ſmelling, ſavouring, and touching. But in helle hir ſight ſhal be ful of derkeneſſe and of ſmoke, and hir eyen ful of teres, and hir hering ful of waimenting and grinting of teeth, as ſayth Jeſu Criſt, Hir noſe thirles ſhul be ful of ſtinking; and, as ſayth Eſay the prophet. Hir ſavouring ſhal be ful of bitter galle; and touching of all hir body ſhall be covered with fire that never ſhal quenche, and with wormes that never ſhal die, as God ſayth by the mouth of Eſay, And for as moche as they ſhul not wene that they mow dien for peine, and by deth flee fro peine, that mow they underſtonde in the word of Job, that ſayth, Ther is the ſhadow of deth. Certes a ſhadowe hath likeneſſe of the thing of which it is ſhadowed, but ſhadowe is not the ſame thing of which it is ſhadowed: right ſo fareth the peine of helle; it is like deth for the horrible anguiſh: and why? for it peineth hem ever as though they ſhuld die anon; but certes they ſhul not dien; for, as ſayth Seint Gregory, To wretched caitifes ſhal be deth withouten deth, and ende withouten ende, and defaute withouten failing; for hir deth ſhal alway live, and hir ende ſhal ever more beginne, and hir defaute ſhal never faile: and therfore ſayth Seint John the Evangeliſt, They ſhul folow deth and they ſhul not finde him, and they ſhul deſire to die and deth ſhal flee from hem. And eke Job ſaith, that in helle is non ordre of rule. And al be it ſo that God hath create all thing in right ordre, and nothing withouten ordre, but all thinges ben ordred and nombred, yet natheles they that ben dampned ben nothing in ordre, ne hold non ordre; for the erth ſhal bere hem no fruite; (for, as the prophet David ſayeth, God ſhal deſtroy the fruite of the erth as fro hem) ne water ſhal yeve hem no moiſture, ne the aire no refreſhing, ne the fire no light: for, as ſayth Seint Baſil, The brenning of the fire of this world ſhal God yeve in helle to hem that ben dampned, but the light and the clereneſſe ſhal be yeve in heven to his children, right as the good man yeveth fleſh to his children and bones to his houndes. And for they ſhul have non hope to eſcape, ſayth Job at laſt, that ther ſhal horrour and griſly drede dwellen withouten ende. Horrour is alway drede of harme that is to come, and this drede ſhal alway dwel in the hertes of hem that ben dampned; and therfore han they lorne all hir hope for ſeven cauſes: firſt, for God, that is hir juge, ſhal be withouten mercie to hem, and they may not pleſe him ne non of his halwes, ne they may yeve nothing for hir raunſom, ne they have no vois to ſpeke to him, ne they may not flee fro peine, ne they have no goodneſſe in hem that they may ſhew to deliver hem fro peine; and therfore ſayth Salomon, The wicked man dieth, and whan he is ded he ſhal have non hope to eſcape fro peine. Who ſo than wold wel underſtonde theſe peines, and bethinke him wel that he hath deſerved theſe peines for his ſinnes, certes he ſhulde have more talent to ſighen and to wepe than for to ſinge and playe; for, as ſayth Salomon, Who ſo that had the ſcience to know the peines that ben eſtabliſhed and ordeined for ſinne he wold forſake ſinne: That ſcience, ſayth Seint Auſtin, maketh a man to waimenten in his herte.

The fourthe point that oughte make a man have contrition is the forweful remembrance of the good dedes that he hath lefte to don here in erthe, and alſo the good that he hath lorne. Sothly the good werkes that he hath lefte, either they be the good werkes that he wrought er he fell into dedly ſinne, or elles the good werkes that he wrought while he lay in ſinne. Sothly the good werkes that he did before that he fell in dedly ſinne ben all mortified, aſtoned, and dulled, by the eft ſinning; the other werkes that he wrought while he lay in ſinne they ben utterly ded as to the lif perdurable in heven. Than thilke good werkes that ben mortificd by eft ſinning, which he did while he was in charitee, moun never quicken ayen without veray penitence: and therof ſayth God by the mouth of Ezechiel, If the rightful man retorne again fro his rightwiſneſſe and do wickedneſſe ſhal he liven? nay; for all the good workes that he hath wrought ſhul never be in remembrance, for he ſhal die in his ſinne. And upon thilke chapitre ſayth Seint Gregorie thus, that we ſhal underſtonde this principally, that when we don dedly ſinne it is for nought than to remembre or drawe into memorie the good werkes that we have wrought beforn, for certes in the werking of dedly ſinne ther is no truſt in no good werk that we have don beforn; that is to ſay, as for to have therby the lif perdurable in heven. But natheles the good werkes quicken again and comen again, and helpe and availe to have the lif perdurable in heven, whan we have contrition; but ſothly the good werkes that men don while they ben in dedly ſinne, for as moche as they were don in dedly ſinne, they may never quicken; for certes thing that never had lif, may never quicken; and natheles al be it ſo that they availen not to have the lif perdurable, yet availen they to abreggen the peine of helle, or elles to get temporal richeſſes, or elles that God wol the rather enlumine or light the herte of the ſinful man to have repentance; and eke they availen for to uſen a man to do good werkes that the ſende have the leſſe power of his ſoule. And thus the certeis Lord Jeſu Criſt ne woll that no good werk that men don be loſte, for in ſomwhat it ſhal availe. But for as moche as the good werkes that men don while they ben in good lif ben all amortiſed by ſinne ſoſowing, and eke ſith all the good werkes that men don while they ben in dedly ſinne ben utterly ded, as for to have the lif perdurable, wel may that man that no good werk ne doth

ſing thilke newe Frenſhe ſong, *J' ay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour*; for certes ſinne bereveth a man both goodneſſe of nature and eke the goodneſſe of grace; for ſothly the grace of the Holy Goſt fareth like fire that may not ben idle, for fire faileth anon as it forletteth his werking, and right ſo grace faileth anon as it forletteth his werking. Than leſeth the ſinful man the goodneſſe of glorie, that only is hight to good men that labouren and werken wel. Wel may he be ſory than that oweth all his lif to God as long as he hath lived, and alſo as long as he ſhal live, that no goodneſſe ne hath to paie with his dette to God, to whom he oweth all his lif; for truſt wel he ſhal yeve accomptes, as ſayth Seint Bernard, of all the goodes that han ben yeven him in this preſent lif, and how he hath hem diſpended, in ſo moche that ther ſhal not periſhe an here of his hed, ne a moment of an houre ne ſhal not periſhe of his time that he ne ſhal yeve therof a rekening.

The fifthe thing that ought to meve a man to contrition is remembrance of the paſſion that our Lord Jeſu Criſt ſuffered for our ſinnes; for, as ſayth Seint Bernard, While that I live I ſhal have remembrance of the travailes that our Lord Jeſu Criſt ſuffered in preching, his werineſſe in traveling, his temptations whan he faſted, his long wakinges whan he prayed, his teres whan he wept for pitee of good peple, the wo, and the ſhame, and the filthe, that men ſayden to him, of the foule ſpitting that met ſpitten in his face, of the buffettes that men yave him, of the foule mouthes and of the foule repreves that men ſaiden to him, of the nayles with which he was nailed to the croſſe, and of all the remenant of his paſſion that he ſuffred for mannes ſinne, and nothing for his gilte. And here ye ſhul underſtand that in mannes ſinne is every maner order or ordinance tourned up ſo doun; for it is ſoth that God and reſon, and ſenſualitee, and the body of man, ben ordained that everich of thiſe foure thinges ſhuld have lordſhip over that other, as thus; God ſhuld have lordſhip over reſon, and reſon over ſenſualitee, and ſenſualitee over the body of man. But ſothly whan man ſinneth al this ordre or ordinance is turned up ſo doun; and therfore than, for as moche as reſon of man ne wol not be ſubget ne obeiſant to God, that is his Lord, by right therfore leſeth it the lordſhip that it ſhuld have over ſenſualitee, and eke over the body of man: and why? for ſenſualitee rebelleth than ayenſt reſon, and by that way leſeth reſon the lordſhip over ſenſualitee and over the body; for right as reſon is rebel to God, right ſo is ſenſualitee rebel to reſon and the body alſo And certes this diſordinance and this rebellion our Lord Jeſu Criſt abought upon his precious body ful dere: and herkeneth in whiche wiſe; for as moche as reſon is rebel to God, therfore is man worthy to have ſorwe, and to be ded: this ſuffred our Lord Jeſu Criſt for man after that he had be betraied of his diſciple, and diſtreined and bounde, ſo that his blood braſt out at every nail of his hondes, as ſaith Seint Auguſtin. And ferthermore, for as moche as reſon of man wol not daunt ſenſualitee whan it may, therfore is man worthy to have ſhame; and this ſuffred our Lord Jeſu Criſt for man whan they ſpitten in his viſage. And fertherover, for as moche as the caitif body of man is rebel both to reſon and to ſenſualitee, therfore it is worthy the deth; and this ſuffred our Lord Jeſu Criſt upon the croſſe, wheras ther was no part of his body free without grete peine and bitter paſſion; and all this ſuffred our Lord Jeſu Criſt that never forfaited: and thus ſayd he; To mochel am I peined for thinges that I never deſerved, and to moche defouled for ſhendſhip that man is worthy to have: and therfore may the ſinful man wel ſay, as ſayth Seint Bernard, Accurſed be the bitterneſſe of my ſinne, for whiche ther muſt be ſuffered ſo moche bitterneſſe: for certes after the divers diſcordance of our wickedneſſe was the paſſion of Jeſu Criſt ordeined in divers thinges, as thus; certes ſinful mannes ſoule is betraied of the divel by coveitiſe of temporel proſperitee, and ſcorned by diſceite whan he cheſeth fleſhly delites, and yet it is turmented by impatience of adverſitee, and beſpet by ſervage and ſubjection of ſinne, and at the laſt it is ſlain finally. For this diſcordance of ſinful man was Jeſu Criſt firſt betraied, and after that was he bounde that came for to unbinde us of ſinne and of peine; than was he beſcorned that only ſhuld have ben honoured in alle thinges and of alle thinges; than was his viſage, that ought to be deſired to be ſeen of all mankind (in which viſage angels deſiren to loke) vilainſly beſpet; than was he ſcourged that nothing had treſpaſſed; and, finally, than was he crucified and ſlain: than were accompliſhed the wordes of Eſaie, He was wounded for our miſdedes, and defouled for our felonies. Now ſith that Jeſu Criſt toke on himſelf the peine of all our wickednefſes, moche ought ſinful man to wepe and to bewaile that for his ſinnes Goddes ſone of heven ſhuld all this peine endure.

The ſixte thing that ſhuld move a man to contrition is the hope of three thinges; that is to ſay, foryeveneſſe of ſinne, and the yeft of grace for to do wel, and the glorie of heven, with whiche God ſhal guerdon man for his good dedes: and for as moche as Jeſu Criſt yeveth us thiſe yeftes of his largeneſſe and of his ſoveraine bountee, therfore is he cleped *Jeſus Nazarenus Rex. Judeorum*. Jeſus is for to ſay Saviour or Salvation, on whom men ſhul hopen to have foryeveneſſe of ſinnes, which that is proprely ſalvation of ſinnes; and therfore ſayd the angel to Joſeph, Thou ſhalt clepe his name Jeſus that ſhal ſaven his peple of hir ſinnes. And hereof ſaith Seint Peter, Ther is non other name under heven, that is yeven to any man, by which a man may be ſaved but only Jeſus. Nazarenus is as moche for to ſay as floriſhing, in which a man ſhal hope that he that yeveth him remiſſion of ſinnes ſhal yeve him alſo grace wel for to do; for in the flour is hope of fruit in time coming, and in foryeveneſſe of ſinnes hope of grace wel to do. I was at the dore of thin herte, ſayth Jeſus, and clepeth for to enter; he

that openeth to me ſhal have foryeveneſſe of his ſinnes, and I wol enter into him by my grace, and ſoupe with him by the good werkes that he ſhal don, which werkes ben the food of God, and he ſhal ſoupe with me by the gret joye that I ſhal yeve him. Thus ſhal man hope that for his werkes of penance God ſhal yeve him his regne, as he behight him in the Goſpel.

Now ſhal man underſtande in which maner ſhal be his contrition. I ſay that it ſhal be univerſal and total; this is to ſay, a man ſhal be veray repentant for all his ſinnes that he hath don in delite of his thought, for delite is perilous: for ther ben two maner of conſentinges; that on of hem is cleped Conſenting of Affection, whan a man is meved to do ſinne, and than deliteth him longe for to thinke on that ſinne, and his reſon apperceiveth it wel that it is ſinne ayenſt the lawe of God, and yet his reſon refraineth not his ſoule delite or talent though he ſee wel apertly that it is ayenſt the reverence of God; although his reſon conſent not to do that ſinne indede, yet ſayn ſom doctours that ſwiche delite that dwelleth longe is ful perilous, al be it never ſo lite: and alſo a man ſhuld ſorrow, namely for all that ever he hath defired ayenſt the lawe of God, with parfite conſenting of his reſon, for therof is no doute that it is dedly ſinne in conſenting; for certes ther is no dedly ſinne but that it is firſt in mannes thought, and after that in his delite, and ſo forth into conſenting and into dede; wherfore I ſay that many men ne repent hem never of ſwiche thoughtes and delites, ne never ſhriven hem of it, but only of the dede of gret ſinnes outward; wherfore I ſay that ſwiche wicked delites ben ſubtil begilers of hem that ſhul be dampned. Moreover, man ought to ſorwen for his wicked wordes as wel as for his wicked dedes, for certes repentance of a ſinguler ſinne, and not repentant of all his other ſinnes, or elles repenting him of all his other ſinnes and not of a ſinguler ſinne, may not availe; for certes God Almighty is all good, and therfore either he foryeveth all, or elles right nought; and therfore ſayth Seint Auguſtin, I wote certainly that God is enemy to every ſinner: and how than? he that obſerveth on ſinne ſhal he have foryeveneſſe of the remenant of his other ſinnes? nay. And furtherover, contrition ſhuld be wonder ſorweful and anguiſhous, and therfore yeveth him God plainly his mercie: and therfore whan my ſoule was anguiſhous, and ſorweful within me, than had I remembrance of God that my praier might come to him. Furtherover, contrition muſte be continuel, and that man have ſtedfaſt purpoſe to ſhrive him and to amend him of his lif; for ſothly while contrition laſteth man may ever hope to have foryeveneſſe: and of this cometh hate of ſinne, that deſtroyeth ſinne bothe in himſelf and eke in other folk at his power; for which ſayth David, They that love God hate wickedneſſe; for to love God is for to love that he loveth, and hate that he hateth.

The laſt thing that men ſhull underſtand in contrition is this, wherof availeth contrition. I ſay that contrition ſomtime delivereth man fro ſinne; of which David ſaith, I ſay, (quod David) I purpoſed fermely to ſhrive me, and thou Lord releſedeſt my ſinne. And right ſo as contrition availeth not without ſad purpos of ſhrift and ſatisfaction, right ſo litel worth is ſhrift or ſatisfaction withouten contrition. And moreover, contrition deſtroyeth the priſon of helle, and maketh weke and feble all the ſtrengthes of the devils, and reſtoreth the yeſtes of the Holy Goſt and of all good vertues, and it clenſeth the ſoule of ſinne, and delivereth it fro the peine of helle, and fro the compagnie of the devil, and fro the ſervage of ſinne, and reſtoreth it to all goodes ſpirituel, and to the compagnie and communion of holy chirche. And furtherover, it maketh him that whilom was ſone of ire to be the ſone of grace: and all theſe thinges ben preved by holy writ; and therfore he that wold ſet his entent to thiſe thinges he were ful wiſe; for ſothly he ne ſhuld have than in all his lif corage to ſinne, but yeve his herte and body to the ſervice of Jeſu Criſt, and therof do him homage; for certes our Lord Jeſu Criſt hath ſpared us ſo benignely in our folies, that if he had ne pitee on mannes ſoule a ſory ſong might we alle ſinge.

Explicit prima pars penitentiæ, et incipit pars ſecunda.

The ſecond part of penitence is confeſſion, and that is ſigne of contrition. Now ſhul ye underſtonde what is confeſſion, and whether it ought nedes to be don or non, and which thinges ben convenable to veray confeſſion.

Firſt ſhalt thou underſtande that confeſſion is veray ſhewing of ſinnes to the preeſt; this is to ſaie veray, for he muſt confeſſe him of all the conditions that belongen to his ſinne as ferforth as he can: all muſt be ſayd, and nothing excuſed, ne hid, ne forwrapped, and not avaunt him of his good werkes: alſo it is neceſſarie to underſtande whennes that ſinnes ſpringen, and how they encreſen, and which they ben.

Of ſpringing of ſinnes ſaith Seint Poule in this wiſe; that right as by on man ſinne entred firſt into this world, and thurgh ſinne deth, right ſo deth entreth into alle men that ſinnen: and this man was Adam, by whom ſinne entred into this world whan he brake the commandement of God: and therfore he that firſt was ſo mighty that he ne ſhuld have died, became ſwiche on that he muſt nedes die whether he wold or no; and all his progenie in this that in thilke maner ſinnen dien. Loke that in the eſtate of innocence, whan Adam and Eve weren naked in Paradiſe, and no thing ne hadden ſhame of hir nakedneſſe, how that the ſerpent, that was moſt wily of all other beſtes that God had made, ſayd to the woman, Why commanded God you that ye ſhuld not ete of every tree in Paradiſe? The woman anſwered, Of the fruit, ſayd ſhe, of the trees of Paradiſe we feden us, but of the fruit of the tree that is in the middel of Paradiſe, God forbode us for to eten, ne to touche it, leſt we ſhuld die. The ſerpent ſayd to the woman, Nay, nay, ye ſhul not dien of deth

for ſoth God wote that what day that ye ete therof your eyen ſhul open, and ye ſhul be as goddes, knowing good and harme. The woman ſaw that the tree was good to feding, and faire to the eyen, and delectable to the ſight; ſhe toke of the fruit of the tree and did ete, and yave to hire huſbond, and he ete; and anon the eyen of hem both opened: and whan they knewe that they were naked, they ſowed of a fig-tree leves in maner of breches to hiden hir members. Here mow ye ſeen that dedly ſinne hath firſt ſuggeſtion of the fende, as ſheweth here by the adder, and afterward the delit of the fleſh, as ſheweth here by Eve, and after that the conſenting of reſon, as ſheweth by Adam; for truſt wel though ſo it were that the fende tempted Eve, that is to ſay, the fleſh, and the fleſh had delit in the beautee of the fruit defended, yet certes til that reſon, that is to ſay Adam, conſented to the eting of the fruit, yet ſtode he in the ſtate of innocence. Of thilke Adam toke we thilke ſinne original; from him fleſhly deſcended be we all, and engendred of vile and corrupt mater; and whan the ſoule is put in our bodies, right anon is contract original ſinne, and that that was erſt but only peine of concupiſcence is afterward both peine and ſinne; and therfore we ben all yborne ſones of wrath and of dampnation perdurable, if ne were baptiſme that we receive, which benimeth us the culpe: but forſoth the peine dwelleth with us as to temptation, which peine hight concupiſcence. This concupiſcence, whan it is wrongfully diſpoſed or ordeined in man, it maketh him coveit, by coveitiſe of fleſh, fleſhly ſinne by ſight of his eyen, as to erthly thinges, and alſo coveitiſe of highneſſe by pride of herte.

Now, as to ſpeke of the firſt coveitiſe, that is, concupiſence, after the lawe of our membres that were lawfully ymaked, and by rightful jugement of God, I ſay, for as moche as a man is not obeiſant to God that is his Lord, therfore is his herte to him diſobeiſant thurgh concupiſcence, which is called nouriſhing of ſinne, and occaſion of ſinne; therfore all the while that a man hath within him the peine of concupiſence it is impoſſible but he be tempted ſomtime, and moved in his fleſh to ſinne. And this thing may not faile as long as he liveth; it may wel waxe feble by vertue of baptiſme, and by the grace of God thurgh penitence, but fully ne ſhal it never quenche, that he ne ſhal ſomtime be meved in himſelfe but if he were refreined by ſikeneſſe, or malefice of ſorcerie, or cold drinkes. For lo, what ſayth Seint Poule? The fleſh coveiteth ayenſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit ayenſt the fleſh; they ben ſo contrarie and ſo ſtriyen that a man may not alway do as he wold. The ſame Seint Poule, after his gret penance in water and in lond; in water by night and by day in gret peril and in gret peine, in lond in grete famine and thruſt, cold and clothles, and ones ſtoned almoſt to deth, yet ſayd he, Alas! I caitif man, who ſhal deliver me fro the priſon of my caitif body? And Seint Jerom, whan he long time had dwelled in deſert, wheras he had no compaignie but of wilde beſtes, wheras he had no mete but herbes, and water to his drinke, ne no bed but the naked erth, wherfore his fleſh was black as an Ethiopian for hete, and nie deſtroyed for cold, yet ſayd he that the brenning of lecherie boiled in all his body: wherfore I wot wel ſikerly that they be deceived that ſay they be not tempted in hir bodies; witneſſe Seint James, that ſaid that every wight is tempted in his owen conſcience; that is to ſay, that eche of us hath mater and occaſion to be tempted of the nouriſhing of ſinne that is in his body; and therfore ſayth Seint John the Evangeliſt, If we ſay that we ben without ſinne we deceive ourſelf, and truth is not in us.

Now ſhul ye underſtonde in what maner ſinne wexeth and encreſeth in man. The firſt thing is that nouriſhing of ſinne of which I ſpake before, that is, concupiſcence; and after that cometh ſuggeſtion of the devil, this is to ſay, the divels bellous, with which he bloweth in man the fire of concupiſcence; and after that a man bethinketh him whether he wol do or no that thing to which he is tempted; and than if a man withſtond and weive the firſt entiſing of his fleſh and of the fend than it is no ſinne; and if ſo be he do not, than feleth he anon a flame of delit, and than it is good to beware and kepe him wel, or elles he wol fall anon to conſenting of ſinne, and than wol he do it if he may have time and place. And of this mater ſayth Moyſes by the devil in this maner; The fend ſayth, I wol chace and purſue man by wicked ſuggeſtion, and I wol hent him by meving and ſtirring of ſinne, and I wol depart my pris or my prey by deliberation, and my luſt ſhal be accompliſed in delit; I wol draw my ſwerd in conſenting; (for certes right as a ſwerd departeth a thing in two peces, right ſo conſenting departeth God fro man) and than wol I ſle him with my hond in dede of ſinne. Thus ſayth the fend, for certes than is a man al ded in ſoule; and thus is ſinne accompliſed by temptation, by delit, and by conſenting, and than is the ſinne actuel.

Forſoth ſinne is in two maners; either it is venial or dedly ſinne. Sothly whan a man loveth any creature more than Jeſu Criſt our creatour, than it is dedly ſinne; and venial ſinne it is if a man love Jeſu Criſt leſſe than him ought. Forſoth the dede of this venial ſinne is ful perilous, for it amenuſeth the love that man ſhuld have to God more and more; and therfore if a man charge himſelf with many ſwiche venial ſinnes, certes but if ſo be that he ſomtime diſcharge him of hem by ſhrift, they may wel lightly amenuſe in him all the love that he hath to Jeſu Criſt. And in this wiſe ſkippeth venial ſinne into dedly ſinne; for certes the more that a man chargeth his ſoule with venial ſinnes, the more he is enclined to fall into dedly ſinne; and therfore let us not be negligent to diſcharge us of venial ſinnes; for the proverbe ſayth that many ſmal maken a gret. And herken this enſample: a gret wawe of the ſee cometh ſomtime with ſo gret a violence that it drencheth the ſhip; and the ſame harme do ſomtime the ſmal dropes of water that enteren thurgh a litel crevis in the thurrok, and in the bottom of the

ſhip, if men ben ſo negligent that they diſcharge hem not by time; and therfore although ther be difference betwix thiſe two cauſes of drenching algates, the ſhip is dreint. Right ſo fareth it ſomtime of dedly ſinne and of anoious venial ſinnes, whan they multiplie in man ſo gretly that thilke worldly thinges that he loveth, thurgh which he ſinneth venially, is as gret in his herte as the love of God, or more; and therfore the love of every thing that is not beſet in God, ne don principally for Goddes ſake, although that a man love it leſſe than God, yet it is venial ſinne; and dedly ſinne is whan the love of any thing weigheth in the herte of man as moche as the love of God, or more. Dedly ſinne, as ſayth Seint Auguſtine, is whan a man tourneth his herte fro God, whiche that is veray ſoveraine bountee, that may not chaunge, and yeveth his herte to thing that may chaunge and flitte; and certes that is every thing ſave God of heven; for ſoth is that if a man yeve his love, which that he oweth to God with all his herte, unto a creature, certes as moche of his love as he yeveth to the ſame creature, ſo moche he bereveth fro God, and therfore doth he ſinne; for he that is dettour to God ne yeldeth not to God all his dette, that is to ſayn, all the love of his herte.

Now ſith man underſtondeth generally which is venial ſinne, than is it convenable to tell ſpecially of ſinnes whiche that many a man peraventure demeth hem no ſinnes, and ſhriveth him not of the ſame, and yet natheles they be ſinnes ſothly, as thiſe clerkes writen; this is to ſay, at every tyme that man eteth and drinketh more than ſufficeth to the ſuſtenance of his body, in certain he doth ſinne; eke whan he ſpeketh more than it nedeth, he doth ſinne; eke whan he herkeneth not benignely the complaint of the poure; eke whan he is in hele of body, and wol not faſt whan other folk faſt, without cauſe reſonable; eke whan he ſlepeth more than nedeth, or whan he cometh by that encheſon to late to chirche, or to other werkes of charitee; eke whan he uſeth his wif withouten ſoveraine deſire of engendrure, to the honour of God, or for the entent to yeld his wif his dette of his body; eke whan he wol not viſite the ſike or the priſoner if he may; eke if he love wif or child, or other worldly thing, more than reſon requireth; eke if he flater or blandiſe more than him oughte for any n. ce litee; eke if he amenuſe or withdrawe the almeſſe of the poure; eke if he apparaile his mete more delicioufly than nede is, or ete it to haſtily by likeroufneſſe; eke if he talke vanitees in the chirche, or at Goddes ſervice, or that he be a taler of idle wordes of folie or vilanie, for he ſhal yeld accomptes of it at the day of dome; eke whan he behighteth or aſſureth to don thinges that he may not perfourme; eke whan that he by lightneſſe of foly miſſayeth or ſcorneth his neighbour; eke whan he hath ony wicked ſuſpecion of thing ther he ne wote of it no ſothfaſtneſſe. Thiſe thinges, and mo withouten nombre, be ſinnes, as ſayth Seint Auguſtine. Now ſhul ye underſtonde that al be it ſo that non erthly man may eſchewe al venial ſinnes, yet may he refreine him by the brenning love that he hath to our Lord Jeſu Criſt, and by prayer and confeſſion, and other good werkes, ſo that it ſhal but litel grieve: for, as ſayth Seint Auguſtine, If a man love God in ſwiche maner that all that ever he doth is in the love of God, or for the love of God verayly, for he brenneth in the love of God, loke how moche that o drope of water which falleth into a fourneis ful of fire anoieth or greveth the brenning of the fire, in like maner anoieth or greveth a venial ſinne unto that man whiche is ſtedfaſt and parfite in the love of our Saviour Jeſu Criſt. Furthermore, men may alſo refreine and put away venial ſinne by receiving worthily the precious body of Jeſu Criſt, by receiving eke of holy water, by almes dede, by general confeſſion of *confiteor* at maſſe, and at prime, and at complin, and by bleſſing of biſhoppes and preeſtes, and by other good werkes.

De Septem Peccatis Mortalibus.

Now it is behovely to tellen whiche ben dedly ſinnes, that is to ſay, chiefetaines of ſinnes, for as moche as all they ren in o lees, but in divers maners. Now ben they cleped chiefetaines for as moche as they be chiefe, and of hem ſpringen all other ſinnes. The rote of thiſe ſinnes than is pride, the general rote of all harmes, for of this rote ſpringen certain braunches, as ire, envie, accide or ſlouthe, avariſe or coveitiſe, (to common underſtonding) glotonie, and lecherie; and eche of thiſe chief ſinnes hath his braunches and his twigges, as ſhal be declared in hir chapitres following.

De Superbia.

And though ſo be that no man knoweth utterly the nombre of the twigges and of the harmes that comen of pride, yet wol I ſhew a partie of hem as ye ſhul underſtond. Ther is inobedience, avaunting, ipocriſie, deſpit, arrogance, impudence, ſwelling of herte, inſolence, elation, impatience, ſtrif, contumacie, preſumption, irreverence, pertinacie, vaine glorie, and many other twigges that I cannot declare. Inobedient is he that diſobeyeth for deſpit to the commandements of God, and to his ſoveraines, and to his goſtly fader; avauntour is he that boſteth of the harme or of the bountee that he hath don; ipocrite is he that hideth to ſhew him ſwiche as he is, and ſheweth him to ſeme ſwiche as he is not; deſpitous is he that hath diſdain of his neighebour, that is to ſayn, of his even Criſten, or hath deſpit to do that him ought to do; arrogant is he that thinketh that he hath thoſe bountees in him that he hath not, or weneth that he ſhulde have hem by his deſerving, or elles that demeth that he be that he is not; impudent is he that for his pride hath no ſhame of his ſinnes; ſwelling of herte is whan man rejoyceth him of harme that he hath don; inſolent is he that deſpiſeth in his jugement all other folk as in regarde of his value, of his conning, of his ſpeking, and of

his bering; elation is whan he ne may neither ſuffre to have maiſtre ne felawe; impatient is he that wol not be taught ne undernome of his vice, and by ſtrif werrieth truth wetingly, and defendeth his foly; *contumax* is he that thurgh his indignation is ayenſt every auctoritee or power of hem that ben his ſoveraines; preſumption is whan a man undertaketh an empriſe that him ought not to do, or elles that he may not do, and this is called ſurquidrie; irreverence is whan man doth not honour ther as him ought to do, and waiteth to be reverenced; pertinacie is whan man defendeth his foly, and truſteth to moche in his owen wit; vainegloríe is for to have pompe and delit in his temporel highneſſe, and glorye him in his worldly eſtate; jangling is whan man ſpeketh to moche before folk, and clappeth as a mille, and taketh no kepe what he ſayth.

And yet ther is a privee ſpice of pride that waiteth firſt to be ſalewed or he wol ſalew, all be he leſſe worthy than that other is; and eke he waiteth to ſit or to go above him in the way, or kiſſe the pax, or ben encenſed or gon to offering before his neighbour, and ſwiche ſemblable thinges, ayenſt his deutee peraventure, but that he hath his herte and his entente in ſwiche a proude deſire to be magnified and honoured beforn the peple.

Now ben ther two maner of prides; that on of hem is within the herte of a man, and that other is without; of whiche ſothly thiſe foreſayd thinges, and mo than I have ſayd, apperteinen to pride that is within the herte of man; and ther be other ſpices of pride that ben withouten; but natheleſs that on of thiſe ſpices of pride is ſigne of that other, right as they gay Leveſell at the taverne is ſigne of the win that is in the celler. And this is in many thinges, as in ſpeche and contenance, and outragious array of clothing; for certes if there had ben no ſinne in clothing Criſt wold not ſo ſone have noted and ſpoken of the clothing of thilke rich man in the Goſpel; and, as Seint Gregory ſayth, that precious clothing is culpable for the derth of it, and for his ſoftneſſe, and for his ſtrangeneſſe and diſguiſing, and for the ſuperfluitee or for the inordinate ſcantneſſe of it. Alas! may not a man ſee as in our daies the ſinneful coſtlewe array of clothing, and namely in to moche ſuperfluitee, or elles in to diſordinate ſcantneſſe.

As to the firſt ſinne, in ſuperfluitee, of clothing, whiche that maketh it ſo dere, to the harm of the peple, not only the coſte of the enbrouding, the diſguſing, endenting or barring, ounding, paling, winding, or bending, and ſemblable waſt of cloth in vanitee but ther is alſo the coſtlewe furring in hir gounes, ſo muche pounſoning of cheſel to maken holes, ſo moche dagging of ſheres, with the ſuperfluitee in length of the foreſaide gounes, trailing in the dong and in the myre, on hors and eke on foot, as wel of man as of woman, that all thilke trailing is verayly (as in effect) waſted, conſumed, threbare, and rotten with dong, rather than it is yeven to the poure, to get damage of the foreſayd poure folk, and that in ſondry wiſe; this is to ſayn, the more that cloth is waſted the more muſt it coſt the pour peple for the ſcarceneſſe; and furtherover, if ſo be that they wolden yeve ſwiche pounſoned and dagged clothing to the poure peple it is not convenient to were for hir eſtate, ne ſuffiſant to bote hir neceſſitee, to kepe hem fro the diſtemperance of the firmament. Upon that other ſide, to ſpeke of the horrible diſordinat ſcantneſſe of clothing, as ben thiſe cutted ſloppes or hanſelines, that thurgh hir ſhortneſſe cover not the ſhameful members of man to wicked entente: alas! ſom of hem ſhewen the boſſe and the ſhape of the horrible ſwollen members, that ſemen like to the maladie of Hernia, in the wrapping of hir hoſen, and eke the buttokkes of hem behinde, that faren as it were the hinder part of a ſhe ape in the ful of the mone. And moreover, the wretched ſwollen members that they ſhew thurgh diſguiſing, in departing of hir hoſen in white and rede, ſemeth that half hir ſhameful privee membres were ſlaine; and if ſo be that they departe hir hoſen in other colours, as is white and blewe, or white and blake, or blake and rede, and ſo forth, than ſemeth it, as by variance of colour, that the half part of hir privee members ben corrupt by the fire of Seint Anthonie, or by cancre, or other ſwiche miſchance. Of the hinder part of hir buttokkes it is ful horrible for to ſee, for certes in that partie of hir body, ther as they purgen hir ſtinking ordure, that foule partie ſhewe they to the peple proudely in diſpite of honeſtee, whiche honeſtee that Jeſu Criſt and his frendes obſerved to ſhewe in hir liſ. Now as to the outragious array of women, God wote that though the viſages of ſome of hem ſemen ful chaſte and debonaire, yet notifien they in hir array of attire likerouſneſſe and pride. I ſay not that honeſtee in clothing of man or woman is uncovenable, but certes the ſuperfluitee or diſordinat ſcarcitee of clothing is reprevable. Alſo the ſinne of ornament or of apparaile is in thinges that apperteine to riding, as in to many delicat hors that ben holden for delit, that ben ſo faire, fatte, and coſtlewe; and alſo in many a vicious knave that is ſuſtained becauſe of hem; in curious herneis, as in ſadles, cropers, peitrels, and bridles, covered with precious cloth and rich, barred and plated of gold and ſilver, for which God ſayth by Zacharie the prophet, I wol confounde the riders of ſwiche hors. Theſe folke taken litel regard to the riding of Goddes ſone of heven, and of his harneis, whan he rode upon the aſſe, and had none other harneis but the poure clothes of his diſciples, ne we rede not that ever he rode on ony other beſte. I ſpeke this for the ſinne of ſuperfluitee, and not for honeſtee, whan reaſon it requireth. And morover, certes pride is gretly notified in holding of gret meinie, whan they ben of litel profite or of right no profite, and namely whan that meinie is felonous and damageous to the peple by hardineſſe of high lordeſhip, or by way of office; for certes ſwiche lordes ſell than hir lordeſhip to the devil of helle whan they ſuſteine the wickedneſſe of hir meinie; or elles whan thiſe folk of low degree, as they that holden hoſtelries, ſuſteinen theſte of hir

hoſtellers, and that is in many maner of deceites; thilke maner of folk ben the flies that folowen the hony, or elles the houndes that folowen the caraine: ſwiche foreſayde folk ſtranglen ſpiritually hir lordeſhipes; for which thus ſaith David the prophet, Wicked deth mot come unto thilke lordſhipes, and God yeve that they mot deſcend into helle all doun, for in hir houſes is iniquitee and ſhrewedneſſe, and not God of heven: and certes but if they don amendement, right as God yave his beniſon to Laban by the ſervice of Jacob, and to Pharao by the ſervice of Joſeph, right ſo God wol yeve his maliſon to ſwiche lordaſhipes as ſuſteine the wickedneſſe of hir ſervants, but they come to amendement. Pride of the table appereth eke ful oft, for certes riche men be cleped to feſtes, and poure folk he put away and rebuked; and alſo in exceſſe of divers metes and drinkes, and namely ſwiche maner bake metes and diſhe metes brenning of wilde fire, and peinted and caſtelled with paper, and ſemblable waſt, ſo that it is abuſion to thinke; and eke in to gret preciouſneſſe or veſſell, and curioſitee of miniſtralcie by which a man is ſtirred more to the delites of luxurie, if ſo be that he ſette his herte the leſſe upon oure Lord Jeſu Criſt, it is a ſinne; and certainly the delites might ben ſo gret in this cas that a man might lightly fall by hem into dedly ſinne. The ſpices that ſourden of pride, ſothly whan they ſourden of malice imagined, aviſed, and forecaſte, or elles of uſage, ben dedly ſinnes it is no doute; and whan they ſourden by freeltee unaviſed ſodenly, and ſodenly withdrawn again, al be they grevous ſinnes I geſſe that they be not dedly. Now might men aſke wherof that pride ſourdeth and ſpringeth? I ſay that ſomtime it ſpringeth of the goodes of nature, ſomtime of the goodes of fortune, and ſomtime of the goodes of grace. Certes the goodes of nature ſtonden only in the goodes of the body or of the ſoul; certes the goodes of the body ben hele of body, ſtrength, deliverneſſe, beautee, gentrie, franchiſe; the goodes of nature of the ſoule ben good wit, ſharpe underſtonding, ſubtil engine, vertue naturel, good memorie: goodes of fortune ben riches, high degree of lordſhipes, and preiſinges of the peple; goodes of grace ben ſcience, power to ſuffre ſpirituel travaile, benignitee, vertuous contemplation, withſtonding of temptation, and ſemblable thinges; of which foreſaid goodes certes it is a gret folie a man to priden him in ony of hem all. Now as for to ſpeke of goodes of nature, God wot that ſomtime we have hem in nature as moche to our damage as to our profite. As for to ſpeke of hele of body, trewely it paſſeth ful lightly, and alſo it is ful ofte encheſon of ſikneſſe of the ſoule, for God wote the fleſh is a gret enemy to the ſoule, and therfore the more that the body is hole the more be we in peril to falle; eke for to priden him in his ſtrength of body it is a grete folie, for certes the fleſh coveiteth ayenſt the ſpirite, and ever the more ſtrong that the fleſh is the ſorier may the ſoule be; and, over all, this ſtrength of body and worldly hardineſſe cauſeth ful of to many man peril and miſchance; alſo to have pride of gentrie is right gret folie, for oft time the gentrie of the body benimeth the gentrie of the ſoule: and alſo we ben all of o fader and of o moder, and all we ben of o nature, rotten and corrupt, bothe riche and poure. For ſoth o maner gentrie is for to preiſe, that apparailleth mannes corage with vertues and moralitees, and maketh him Criſtes child, for truſteth wel that over what man that ſinne hath maiſtrie he is a veray cherl to ſinne.

Now ben ther general ſignes of gentilneſſe, as eſchewing of vice and ribaudrie, and ſervage of ſinne in word, and in werk and contenance, and uſing vertue, as courteſie and cleneneſſe, and to be liberal, that is to ſay, large by meaſure, for thilke that paſſeth meſure is folie and ſinne; another is to remember him of bountee that he of other folk hath received; another is to be benigne to his ſubgettes; wherfor ſaith Seneke, Ther is nothing more covenable to a man of high eſtate than debonairtee and pitee; and therfore thiſe flies that men clepen Bees, whan they make hir king they cheſen on that hath no pricke wherwith he may ſting. Another is, man to have a noble herte and a diligent, to atteihe to high vertuous thinges: now, certes a man to priden him in the goodes of grace is eke an outrageous folie, for thilke yeftes of grace that ſhuld have tourned him to goodneſſe and to medicine tourneth him to venime and confuſion, as ſayth Seint Gregorie. Certes alſo, who ſo prideth him in the goodneſſe of Fortune he is a gret fool, for ſomtime is a man a gret lord by the morwe that is a caitiſe and a wretch or it be night: and ſometime the richneſſe of a man is cauſe of his deth: and ſomtime the delites of a man ben cauſe of grevous maladie thurgh which he dieth. Certes the commendation of the peple is ful falſe and brotel for to truſt; this day they preiſe, to-morwe they blame. God wote deſire to have commendation of the peple hath cauſed deth to many a beſy man.

Remedium Superbiæ.

Now ſith that ſo it is that ye have underſtond what is pride, and which be the ſpices of it, and how mennes pride ſourdeth and ſpringeth, now ye ſhul uuderſtond which is the remedie ayenſt it. Humilitee or mekeneſſe is the remedy ayenſt pride; that is a vertue thurgh which a man hath veray knowledge of himſelf, and holdeth of himſelf no deintee ne no priſ, as in regard of his deſertes, conſidering ever his freeltee. Now ben ther three maner of humilitees, as humilitee in herte, and another in the mouth, and the thridde in werkes. The humilitee in herte is in foure maneres; that on is whan a man holdeth himſelf as nought worth before God of heven; the ſecond is whan he deſpiſeth non other man; the thridde is whan he ne recketh nat though men holde him nought worth; and the fourth is whan he is not ſory of his humilitation. Alſo the humilitee of mouth is in four thinges; in attemperate ſpeche; in humilitee of ſpeche, and whan he confeſſeth

with his owen mouth; that he is ſwiche as he thinketh that he is in herte; another is whan he preiſeth the bountee of another man, and nothing therof amenuſeth. Humilitee eke in werkes is in foure maners: the firſt is whan he putteth other men before him; the ſecond is to cheſe the loweſt place of all; the thridde is gladly to aſſent to good conſeil; the fourth is to ſtond gladly to the award of his ſovereigne, or of hem that is higher in degree; certain this is a gret werk of humilitee.

De Invidia.

After pride wol I ſpeke of the foule ſinne of envie, which that is, after the word of the philoſopher, ſorwe of other mennes proſperitee; and after the word of Seint Auguſtine it is ſorwe of other mennes wele, and joy of other mennes harme. This foule ſinne is platly ayenſt the Holy Goſt: al be it ſo that every ſinne is ayenſt the Holy Goſt, yet natheles for as moche as bountee apperteineth properly to the Holy Goſt, and envie cometh properly of malice, therfore it is properly ayenſt the bountee of the Holy Goſt. Now hath malice two ſpices, that is to ſay, hardineſſe of herte in wickedneſſe, or elles the fleſh of man is ſo blind that he conſidereth not that he is in ſinne, or recketh not that he is in ſinne, which is the hardineſſe of the divel. That other ſpice of envie is whan that a man werrieth trouth whan he wot that it is trouth, and alſo whan he werrieth the grace of God that God hath yeve to his neighbour; and all this is by envie; certes than is envie the werſt ſinne that is, for ſothly all other ſinnes be ſometime only ayenſt on ſpecial vertue, but certes envie is ayenſt al maner vertues and alle goodneſſe, for it is ſory of all bountee of his neighbour: and in this maner it is divers from all other ſinnes, for wel unnethe is ther any ſinne that it ne hath ſom delit in himſelf ſave only envie that ever hath in himſelf anguiſh and ſorwe. The ſpices of envie ben theſe: ther is firſt ſorwe of other mennes goodneſſe and of hir proſperitee, and proſperitee ought to be kindly mater of joye; than is envie a ſiune ayenſt kinde. The ſeconde ſpice of envie is joye of other mennes harme, and that is properly like to the divel, that ever rejoyſeth him of mannes harme. Of thiſe two ſpecies, cometh backbiting; and this ſinne of backbiting or detracting hath certain ſpices, as thus; ſom man preiſeth his neighbour by a wicked entente, for he maketh alway a wicked knotte at the laſte ende; alway he maketh a *but* at the laſt ende, that is digne of more blame than is worth all the preiſing: the ſecond ſpice is, that if a man be good, or doth or ſayth a thing good entente, the backbiter wol turne all that goodeſſe up ſo doun to his ſhrewde entente: the thridde is to amenuſe the bountee of his neighbour: the fourthe ſpice of backbiting is this, that if men ſpeke goodneſſe of a man than wol the backbiter ſay, Parfay ſwiche a man is yet better than he, in diſpreiſing of him that men preiſe: the fifth ſpice is this, for to conſent gladly to herken the harme that men ſpeke of other folk: this ſinne is ful gret, and ay encreſeth after the wicked entent of the backbiter: after backbiting cometh grutching or murmurance, and ſometime it ſpringeth of impatience ayenſt God, and ſomtime ayenſt man: ayenſt God it is whan a man grutcheth ayenſt the peine of helle, or ayenſt poverte, or loſſe of catel, or ayenſt rain or tempeſt, or elles grutcheth that ſhrewes have proſperitee, or elles that good men have adverſitee: and all thiſe thinges ſhuld men ſuffre patiently, for they comen by the rightful jugement and ordinance of God. Somtime cometh grutching of avarice, as Judas grutched ayenſt the Magdeleine whan ſhe anointed the hed of our Lord Jeſu Criſt with hire precious oynement: this maner murmuring is ſwiche as whan man grutcheth of goodneſſe that himſelf doth or that other folk don of hir owen catel. Somtime cometh murmur of pride, as whan Simon the Phariſee grutched ayenſt the Magdeleine whan ſhe approched to Jeſu Criſt and wept at his feet for hire ſinnes: and ſomtime it ſourdeth of envie, whan men diſcover a mannes harme that was privee, or bereth him on hond thing that is falſe. Murmur alſo is oft among ſervants, that grutchen whan hir ſoveraines bidden hem do leful thinges: and for as moche as they dare not openly withſay the commaundement of hir ſoveraines, yet wol they ſay harme and grutche and murmure prively for veray deſpit, which wordes they call the divels *Pater noſter*, though ſo be that the devil had never *Pater noſter*, but that lewed folk yeven it ſwiche a name. Somtime it cometh of ire or privee hate, that noriſheth rancour in the herte, as afterward I ſhal declare. Than cometh eke bitterneſſe of herte, thurgh which bitterneſſe very good dede of his neighbour ſemeth to him bitter and unſavory. Than cometh diſcord, that unbindeth all maner of frendſhip: than cometh ſcorning of his neighbour, al do he never ſo wel: than cometh accuſing, as whan a man ſeketh occaſion to annoyen his neighbour, which is like the craft of the divel, that waiteth both day and night to accuſen us all: than cometh malignitee, thurgh which a man annoieth his neighbour prively if he may, and if he may not algate his wicked will ſhal not let as for to brenne his hous prively, or enpoiſen him, or ſle his beſtes, and ſemblable thinges.

Remedium Invidiæ.

Now wol I ſpeke of the remedie ayenſt this foule ſinne of envie. Firſte is the love of God principally, and loving of his neighbour as himſelf, for ſothly that on ne may not be without that other; and truſt wel that in the name of thy neighbour thou ſhalt underſtande the name of thy brother, for certes all we have on fader fleſhly and on moder, that is to ſay, Adam and Eve, and alſo on fader ſpirituel, that is to ſay, God of heven. Thy neighbour art thou bounde for to

love, and will him all goodneſſe, and therfore ſayth God, Love thy neighbour as thyſelf, that is to ſay, to ſalvation both of lif and ſoule; and moreover, thou ſhalt love him in word, and in benigne amoneſting and chaſtiſing, and comfort him in his anoyes, and praye for him with all thy herte; and in dede thou ſhalt love him in ſwiche wiſe that thou ſhalt do to him in charitee as thou woldeſt that it were don to thin owen perſon, and therfore thou ne ſhalt do him no damage in wicked word, ne harme in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his ſoule, by entiſing of wicked enſample: thou ſhalt not deſire his wif, ne non of his thinges. Underſtonde eke that in the name of Neighbour is comprehended his enemy; certes man ſhal love his enemy for the commandement of God, and ſothly thy frend thou ſhalt love in God: I ſay thin enemy ſhalt thou love for Goddes ſake by his commandement, for if it were reſon that man ſhulde hate his enemy forſoth God n'olde not receive us to his love that ben his enemies. Ayenſt three maner of wronges that his enemy doth to him he ſhal do three thinges, as thus; ayenſt hate and rancour of herte he ſhal love him in herte; ayenſt chiding and wicked wordes he ſhal pray for his enemy; ayenſt the wicked dede of his enemy he ſhal do him bountee; for Criſt ſayth, Love your enemies, and prayeth for hem that ſpeke you harme, and for hem that chaſen and purſuen you, and do bountee to hem that haten you. Lo, thus commandeth us our Lord Jeſu Criſt to do to our enemies. Forſoth nature driveth us to love our frendes, and parfay our enemies have more nede of love than our frendes, and they that more nede have certes to hem ſhal men do goodneſſe; and certes in thilke dede have we remembrance of the love of Jeſu Criſt that died for his enemies; and in as moche as thilke love is more grevous to performe, ſo moche is more gret the merite, and therfore the loving of our enemy hath confounded the venime of the divel; for right as the divel is confounded by humilitee, right ſo is he wounded to the deth by love of our enemy: certes than is love the medicine that caſteth out the venime of envie fro mannes herte.

De Ira.

After envy wol I declare of the ſinne of ire, for ſothly who ſo hath envy upon his neighbour anon communly wol finde him mater of wrath in word or in dede ayenſt him to whom he hath envie. And as wel cometh ire of pride as of envie, for ſothly he that is proude or envious is lightly wroth.

This ſinne of ire, after the diſcriving of Seint Auguſtin, is wicked will to be avenged by word or by dede; ire, after the philoſophre, is the fervent blode of man yquicked in his herte, thurgh which he wold harme to him that he hateth; for certes the herte of man by enchauſing and meving of his blood waxeth ſo troubled that it is out of all maner jugement of reſon. But ye ſhul underſtonde that ire is in two maners, that on of hem is good, and that other is wicked. The good ire is by jalouſie of goodneſſe, thurgh the which man is wroth with wickedneſſe, and again wickedneſſe, and therfore ſaith the wiſe man that ire is better than play. This ire is with debonairtee, and it is wrothe without bitterneſſe; not wrothe ayenſt the man, but wrothe with the miſdede of the man; as ſaith the prophet David, *Iruſcimini, et nolite peccare.* Now underſtond that wicked ire is in two maners, that is to ſay, ſoden ire or haſty ire, without aviſement and conſenting of reſon; the meaning and the ſenſe of this is, that the reſon of a man ne conſenteth not to that ſoden ire, and than it is venial. Another ire is that is ful wicked, that cometh of felonie of herte, aviſed and caſt before, with wicked will to do vengeance, and therto his reſon conſenteth; and ſothly this is dedly ſinne. This ire is ſo diſpleſant to God that it troubleth his hous, and chaſeth the Holy Goſt out of mannes ſoule, and waſteth and deſtroyeth the likeneſſe of God, that is to ſay, the vertue that is in mannes ſoule, and putteth in him the likeneſſe of the devil, and benimeth the man fro God that is his rightful Lord. This ire is a ful gret pleſance to the devil, for it is the devils forneis that he enchauſeth with the fire of helle; for certes right ſo as fire is more mighty to deſtroie erthly thinges than any other element, right ſo ire is mighty to deſtroie all ſpirituel thinges. Loke how that fire of ſmal gledes, that ben almoſt ded under aſhen, wol quicken ayen whan they ben touched with brimſtone; right ſo ire wol evermore quicken ayen whan it is touched with pride that is covered in mannes herte; for certes fire ne may not come out of nothing, but if it were firſt in the ſame thing naturelly, as fire is drawn out of flintes with ſtele; and right ſo as pride is many times mater of ire, right ſo is rancour norice and keper of ire. Ther is a maner tree, as ſayth Seint Iſidore, that whan men make a fire of the ſaide tree, and cover the coles of it with aſhen, ſothly the fire therof wol laſt all a yere or more: and right ſo fareth it of rancour whan it is ones conceived in the herte of ſom men; certes it wol laſten peraventure from on Eaſterne day until another Eaſterne day, or more; but certes the ſame man is ful fer from the mercie of God all thilke while.

In this foreſaid devils forneis ther forgen three ſhrewes, Pride, that ay bloweth and encreſeth the fire by chiding and wicked wordes; than ſtondeth Envie, and holdeth the hot yren upon the herte of man with a pair of longe tonges of longer rancour; and than ſtondeth the ſinne of contumelie, or ſtrif and cheſte, and battereth and forgeth by vilains reprevinges. Certes this curſed ſinne annoyeth both to the man himſelf and eke his neighbour, for ſothly almoſt all the harme or damage that ony man doth to his neighbour cometh of wrath, for certes outrageous wrathe doth all that ever the ſoule ſende willeth or commandeth him; for he ne ſpareth neyther for our Lord Jeſu Criſt ne his ſwete moder; and in his outrageous anger and ire, alas! alas! ful many on at that

time feleth in his herte ful wickedly both of Crift and alfo of all his halwes. Is not this a curfed vice? yes, certes. Alas! it benimmeth fro man his witte and his refon, and all his debonaire lif fpirituel, that fhuld kepe his foule: certes it benimmeth alfo Goddes due lordfhip (and that is mannes foule) and the love of his neighbours; it ftriveth alfo all day ayenft trouth; it reveth him the quiet of his herte, and fubverteth his foule.

Of ire comen thife ftinking engendrures; firft hate, that is olde wrath; difcord, thurgh which a man forfaketh his olde frend that he hath loved ful long, and than cometh werre, and every maner of wrong that a man doth to his neighbour in body or in catel. Of this curfed finne of ire cometh eke manflaughter. And underftondeth wel that homicide (that is manflaughter) is in divers wife. Som maner of homicide is fpirituel, and fom is bodily. Spirituel manflaughter is in fix thinges. Firft, by hate, as fayth Seint John, He that hateth his brother is an homicide. Homicide is alfo by backbiting, of which backbitours fayth Salomon, that they have two fwerdes with which they flay hir neighbours; for fothly as wicked it is to benime of him his good name as his lif. Homicide is alfo in yeving of wicked confeil by fraude, as for to yeve confeil to areife wrongful cuftomes and talages, of which fayth Salomon, A lion roring, and a bare hungrie, ben like to cruel lordes in withholding or a bregging of the hire or of the wages of fervantes, or elles in ufurie, or in withdrawing of the almeffe of poure folk; for which the wife man fayth, Fedeth him that almoft dieth for honger, for fothly but if thou fede him thou fleeft him: and all thife ben dedly finnes. Bodily manflaughter is whan thou fleeft him with thy tonge in other maner, as whan thou commandeft to fle a man, or elles yeveft confeil to fle a man. Manflaughter in dede is in foure maners. That on is by lawe, right as a juftice dampneth him that is culpable to the deth; but let the juftice beware that he do it rightfully, and that he do it not for delit to fpill blood, but for keping of rightwifeneffe. Another homicide is don for neceffitee, as whan a man fleeth another in his defence, and that he ne may non other wife efcapen fro his owen deth; but certain and he may efcape withouten flaughter of his adverfarie he doth finne, and he fhal bere penance as for dedly finne. Alfo if a man by cas or aventure fhete an arowe or caft a ftone with which he fleeth a man, he is an homicide. And if a woman by negligence overlyeth hire child in hire flepe, it is homicide and dedly finne. Alfo whan a man difturbleth conception of a childe, and maketh a woman barein by drinkes of venimous herbes thurgh which fhe may not conceive, or fleeth hire child by drinkes, or elles putteth certain material thing in hire fecret place to flee hire child, or elles doth unkinde finne, by which man or woman fhedeth his nature in place ther as a childe may not be conceived; or elles if a woman hath conceived and hurteth hireffelf, and by that mifhappe the childe is flaine, yet is it homicide. What fay we eke of women that murderen hir children for drede of worldly fhame? certes it is an horrible homicide. Eke if a man approche to a woman by defir of lecherie thurgh which the childe is perifhed, or elles fmitten a woman wetingly, thurgh which fhe leffeth hire child, all thife ben homicides, and horrible dedly finnes. Yet comen ther ire many mo finnes, as wel in worde as in thought and in dede; as he that arretteth upon God, or blameth God of the thing of which he is himfelf gilty, or defpifeth God and all his halwes, as don thife curfed hafardours in divers contrees. This curfed finne don they whan they felen in hir herte ful wickedly of God and of his halwes: alfo whan they treten unreverently the facrament of the auter, thilke finne is fo gret that unneth it may be releffed, but that the mercy of God paffeth all his werkes, it is fo gret, and he fo benigne. Than cometh alfo of ire attry anger, whan a man is fharpely amonefted in his fhrift to leve his finne; than wol he be angry, and anfwere hokerly and angerly, to defend or excufen his finne by unftedfaftneffe of his flefh; or elles he did it for to hold compagnie with his felawes; or elles he fayeth the fend enticed him; or elles he did it for his youthe; or elles his complexion is fo corageous that he may not forbere; or elles it is his deftinee, he fayth, unto a certain age; or elles he fayth it cometh him of gentilneffe of his aunceftres, and femblable thinges. All thife maner of folke fo wrappen hem in hir finnes that they ne wol not deliver hemfelf, for fothly no wight that excufeth himfelf wilfuly of his finne may not be delivered of his finne til that he mekely beknoweth his finne. After this than cometh fwering, that is expreffe ayenft the commandement of God; and that befalleth often of anger and of ire: God fayth, Thou fhalt not take the name of thy Lord God in idel: alfo our Lord Jefu Crift fayth by the word of Seint Mathew, Ne fhal ye not fwere in all manere, neyther by heven, for it is Goddes trone, ne by erthe, for it is the benche of his feet, ne by Jerufalem, for it is the citee of a gret king, ne by thin hed, for thou ne mayft not make an here white ne black; but he fayth, Be your word ye, ye, nay, nay; and what that is more it is of evil. Thus fayth Crift, for Criftes fake fwere not fo finnefully, in difmembring of Crift, by foule, herte, bones, and body; for certes it femeth that ye thinken that the curfed Jewes difmembred him not ynough, but ye difmembre him more. And if fo be that the lawe compell you to fwere, than reuleth you after the lawe of God in your fwering, as fayth Jeremie, Thou fhalt kepe three conditions; thou fhalt fwere in trouth, in dome, and in rightwifeneffe; this is to fay, thou fhalt fwere foth, for every leffing is ayenft Crift, for Crift is veray trouth: and thinke wel this, that every gret fwerer, not compelled lawfully to fwere, the plage fhal not depart fro his hous while he ufeth unleful fwering. Thou fhalt fwere alfo in dome, whan thou art conftreined by the domeffman to

witneſſe a trouth. Alſo thou ſhalt not ſwere for envie, neyther for favour ne for mede, but only for rightwiſeneſſe, and for declaring of trouthe to the honour and worſhip of God, and to the aiding and helping of thin even Criſten: and therfore every man that taketh Goddes name in idel, or falſely ſwereth with his mouth, or elles taketh on him the name of Criſt, to be called a Criſten man, and liveth agenſt Criſtes living and his teching, all they take Goddes name in idel. Loke alſo what ſayth Seint Peter, *Actuum* iv. *Non eſt aliud nomen ſub cælo, &c.*; Ther is non other name (ſayth Seint Peter) under heven yeven to men in which they may be ſaved, that is to ſay, but the name of Jeſu Criſt. Take kepe eke how precious is the name of Jeſu Criſt, as ſayth Seint Poule *ad Philipenſes* ii. *In nomine Jeſu, &c.*; that in the name of Jeſu every knee of hevenly creature, or erthly, or of helle, ſhuld bowen; for it is ſo high and worſhipful that the curſed fend in helle ſhuld tremble for to here it named. Than ſemeth it that men that ſwere ſo horribly by his bleſſed name, that they deſpiſe it more boldely than did the curſed Jewes, or elles the divel, that trembleth whan he hereth his name.

Now certes ſith that ſwering (but if it be lawfully don) is ſo highly defended, moche worſe is for to ſwere falſely and eke nedeles.

What ſay we eke of hem that deliten hem in ſwering, and hold it a genterie or manly dede to ſwere gret othes? and what of hem that of veray uſage ne ceſe not to ſwere gret othes, al be the cauſe not worth a ſtrawe? certes this is horrible ſinne: ſwering ſodenly without aviſement is alſo a gret ſinne. But let us go now to that horrible ſwering of adjuration and conjuration, as don thiſe falſe enchantours and nigromancers in baſins ful of water, or in a bright ſwerde, in a cercle, or in a fire, or in a ſholder bone of a ſhepe: I cannot ſayn but that they do curſedly and dammably ayenſt Criſt, and all the faith of holy chirche.

What ſay we of hem that beleven on divinales, as by flight or by noiſe of briddes or of beſtes, or by ſorte of geomancie, by dremes, by chirking of dores, or cracking of houſes, by gnawing of rattes, and ſwiche maner wretchedneſſe? Certes all thiſe thinges ben defended by God and holy chirche, for which they ben accurſed, till they come to amendement, that on ſwiche filth ſet hir beleve. Charmes for woundes, or for maladies of men or of beſtes, if they take any effect it may be peraventure that God ſuffreth it for folk ſhuld yeve the more feith and reverence to his name.

Now wol I ſpeke of leſinges, which generally is falſe ſignifiance of word, in entent to deceive his even Criſten. Some leſing is of which ther cometh non avantage to no wight; and ſom leſing turneth to the profite and eſe of a man, and to the dammage of another man; another leſing is for to ſaven his lif or his catel; another leſing cometh of delit for to lie, in which delit they wol forge a long tale, and peint it with all circumſtances, wher all the ground of the tale is falſe; ſome leſing cometh for he wol ſuſtein his word; and ſom leſing cometh of recchleſneſſe withouten aviſement, and ſemblable thinges.

Let us now touche the vice of flaterie, which ne cometh not gladly, but for drede or for covetiſe. Flaterie is generally wrongful preiſing: flaterers ben the devils nourices, that nouriſh his children with milke of loſengerie. Forſoth Salomon ſayth that flaterie is werſe than detraction, for ſomtime detraction maketh an hautein man be the more humble, for he dredeth detraction, but certes flaterie maketh a man to enhaunce his herte and his contenance. Flaterers ben the devils enchauntours, for they maken a man to wenen himſelf be like that he is not like: they be like to Judas that betrayed God; and thiſe flaterers betrayen man to ſelle him to his enemy, that is the devil. Flaterers ben the devils chappeleines, that ever ſingen *Placebo*. I reken flaterie in the vices of ire, for oft time if a man be wroth with another, than wol he flater ſom wight to ſuſteine him in his quarrel.

Speke we now of ſwiche curſing as cometh of irous herte. Maliſon generally may be ſaid every maner power of harme: ſwiche curſing bereveth man the regne of God, as ſayth Seint Poule; and oft time ſwiche curſing wrongfully retorneth again to him that curſeth, as a bird retorneth again to his owen neſt: and over all thing men ought eſchew to curſe hir children, and to yeve to the devil hir engendrure, as fer forth as in hem is; certes it is a grete peril and a grete ſinne.

Let us than ſpeke of chiding and repreving, which ben ful grete woundes in mannes herte, for they unſow the ſeames of frendſhip in mannes herte; for certes unnethe may a man be plainely accorded with him that he hath openly reviled, repreved, and diſclaundred; this is a full griſly ſinne, as Criſt ſayth in the goſpel. And take ye kepe now that he that repreveth his neighbour either he repreveth him by ſom harme of peine that he hath upon his bodie, as meſel, croked harlot, or by ſom ſinne that he doth: now if he repreve him by harme of peine, than turneth the repreve to Jeſu Criſt; for peine is ſent by the rightwiſe onde of God, and by his ſuffrance, be it meſelrie, or maime, or maladie; and if he repreve him uncharitably of ſinne, as thou holour, thou dronkelewe harlot, and ſo forth, than appertaineth that to the rejoicing of the devil, which ever hath joye that men don ſinne. And certes chiding may not come but out of a vilains herte, for after the haboundance of the herte ſpeketh the mouth ful oft. And ye ſhul underſtond that loke by any way whan ony man chaſtiſeth another that he beware fro chiding or repreving, for trewely but he beware he may ful lightly quicken the fire of anger and of wrath, which he ſhuld quench, and peraventure ſleth him that he might chaſtiſe with benignitee; for, as ſayth Salomon, The amiable tonge is the tree of lif, that is to ſay, of lif ſpirituel; and ſothly a diſſolute tonge ſleth the ſpirit of him that repreveth, and alſo of him which is repreved. Lo, what ſayth Seint Auguſtine; Ther

is nothing ſo like the devils child as he which oft chideth; a ſervant of God behoveth not to chide; and though that chiding be a vilains thing betwix all maner folk, yet it is certes moſt uncovenable betwene a man and his wif, for ther is never reſt; and therfore ſayth Salomon, An hous that is uncovered in rayn and dropping and a chiding wif ben like; a man which is in a dropping hous in many places though he eſchew the dropping in o place, it droppeth on him in another place; ſo fareth it by a chiding wif, if ſhe chide him not in o place ſhe wol chide him in another; and therfore better is a morſel of bred with joye than an hous filled ful of delices with chiding, ſayth Salomon: and Seint Poule ſayth, O ye women! beth ye ſubgettes to your huſbonds as you behoveth in God; and ye men loveth your wives.

Afterward ſpeke we of ſcorning, which is a wicked ſinne, and namely whan he ſcorneth a man for his good werkes, for certes ſwiche ſcorners faren like the foule tode, that may not endure to ſmell the ſwete ſavour of the vine whan it flouriſheth: thiſe ſcorners ben parting felaws with the devil, for they have joye whan the devil winneth, and ſorwe if he leſeth; they ben adverſaries to Jeſu Criſt, for they hate that he loveth, that is to ſay, ſalvation of ſoule.

Speke we now of wicked conſeil, for he that wicked conſeil yeveth is a traitour, for he deceiveth him that truſteth in him; but natheleſs yet is wicked conſeil firſt ayenſt himſelf; for, as ſayth the wiſe man, Every falſe living hath this propertee in himſelf, that he that wol annoy another man, he annoyeth firſt himſelf. And men ſhul underſtond that man ſhal not take his conſeil of falſe folk, ne of angry folk, or grevous folk, ne of folk that loven ſpecially hir owen profit, ne of to moche worldly folk, namely in conſeiling of mannes ſoule.

Now cometh the ſinne of hem that maken diſcord among folk, which is a ſinne that Criſt hateth utterly; and no wonder is, for he died for to make concord; and more ſhame don they to Criſt than did they that him crucified; for God loveth better that friendſhip be amonges folk than he did his owen body, which that he yave for unitee; therfore ben they likened to the devil, that ever is about to make diſcord.

Now cometh the ſinne of double tonge, ſwiche as ſpeke faire before folk and wickedly behind, or elles they make ſemblaunt as though they ſpake of good entention, or elles in game and play, and yet they ſpeken of wicked entente.

Now cometh bewreying of conſeil, thurgh which a man is defamed: certes unnethe may he reſtore the damage: now cometh manace, that is an open folie, for he that oft manaceth he threteth more than he may performe ful oft time: now comen idel wordes that be without profite of him that ſpeketh the wordes, and eke of him that herkeneth the wordes, or elles idel wordes ben tho that ben nedeles, or withouten entente of naturel profit; and al be it that idel wordes be ſomtime veniel ſinne, yet ſhuld men doute hem, for we ſhul yeve rekening of hem before God. Now cometh jangling, that may not come withouten ſinne; and, as ſayth Salomon, It is a ſigne of apert folie; and therfore a philoſophre ſayd, whan a man axed him how that he ſhuld pleſe the peple, he anſwered, Do many good werkes, and ſpeke few jangelinges. After this cometh the ſinne of japeres, that ben the devils apes, for they make folk to laugh at hir japerie, as folk don at the gaudes of an ape; ſwiche japes defendeth Seint Poule. Loke how that vertuous wordes and holy comforten hem that travaillen in the ſervice of Criſt, right ſo comforten the vilains words and the knakkes of japeres hem that travaillen in the ſervice of the devil. Thiſe ben the ſinnes of the tonge, that comen of ire, and other ſinnes many mo.

Remedium Ire.

The remedie ayenſt ire is a vertue that cleped is Manſuetude, that is debonairtee, and eke another vertue that men clepen Patience or Sufferaunce.

Debonairtee withdraweth and refreineth the ſtirrings and mevings of mannes corage in his herte in ſwich maner that they ne ſkip not out by anger ne ire; ſufferance ſuffereth ſwetely all the annoyance and the wrong that is don to man outward. Seint Jerome ſayth this of debonairtee, that it doth no harme to no wight ne ſayth, ne for no harme that men do ne ſay he ne chaſeth not ayenſt reſon. This vertue ſomtime cometh of nature; for, as ſayth the philoſophre, A man is a quick thing, by nature debonaire, and tretable to goodneſſe; but whan debonairtee is enformed of grace, than it is the more worth.

Patience is another remedy ayenſt ire, and is a vertue that ſuffereth ſwetely every mannes goodneſſe, and is not wroth for non harme that is don to him. The philoſophre ſayth that patience is the vertue that ſuffreth debonairly al the outrage of adverſitee and every wicked word. This vertue maketh a man like to God, and maketh him Goddes owen childe, as ſayth Criſt: this vertue diſcomfiteth thin enemies; and therfore ſayth the wiſe man, If thou wolt vanquiſh thin enemie ſee thou be patient. And thou ſhalt underſtond that a man ſuffereth foure maner of grevances in outward thinges, ayenſt the which foure he muſt have foure maner of patiences.

The firſt grevance is of wicked wordes; thilke grevance ſuffred Jeſu Criſt, without grutching, ful patiently, whan the Jewes deſpiſed him and repreved him ful oft: ſuffer thou therfore patiently, for the wiſe man ſaith, If thou ſtrive with a foole, though the foole be wroth, or though he laugh, algate thou ſhalt have no reſte. That other grevance outward is to have domage of thy catel; therayenſt ſuffred Criſt ful patiently whan he was deſpoiled of al that he had in this lif, and that n'as but his clothes. The thridde grevance is a man to have harme in his body; that ſuffred Criſt ful patiently in all his paſſion. The fourthe grevance is in outrageous labour in werkes; wher-

fore I say that folk that make hir servants to travaile to grevously, or out of time, as in holy dayes, sothly they do gret sinne: hereayenst suffered Crist ful patiently, and taught us patience, whan he bare upon his blessed sholders the crosse upon which he shuld suffer despitous deth. Here may men lerne to be patient; for certes not only Cristen men be patient for love of Jesu Crist, and for guerdon of the blisful lif that is perdurable, but certes the old Payenes, that never were christened, commendeden and usseden the vertue of patience.

A philosophre upon a time that wold have beten his disciple for his gret trespas, for which he was gretly meved, and brought a yerde to bete the childe, and whan this child sawe the yerde he sayd to his maister, What thinke ye to do? I wol bete thee, sayd the maister, for thy correction. Forsoth, sayd the childe, ye ought first correct yourselfe, that have lost all your patience for the offence of a child. Forsooth, sayd the maister, all weping, thou sayest soth; have thou the yerde, my dere sone! and correct me for min impatience. Of patience cometh obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist, and to all hem to which he ought to be obedient in Crist. And understand wel that obedience is parfite whan that a man doth gladly and hastily, with good herte entirely, all that he shuld do. Obedience generally, is to performe hastily the doctrine of God and of his soveraines, to which him ought to be obeisant in all rightwisenesse.

De Accidia.

After the sinne of wrath now wol I speke of the sinne of accidie or slouth; for envie blindeth the herte of a man, and ire troubleth a man, and accidie maketh him hevy, thoughtful, and wrawe. Envie and ire maken bitternesse in herte, which bitternesse is mother of accidie, and benimeth him the love of alle goodnesse; than is accidie the anguish of a trouble herte: and Seint Augustine sayth, It is annoye of goodnesse and annoye of harme. Certes this is a damnable sinne, for it doth wrong to Jesu Crist, in as moche as it benimeth the service that men shulde do to Crist with alle diligence, as sayth Salomon; but accidie doth non swiche diligence: he doth all thing with annoye, and with wrawnesse, slackenesse, and excusation, with idelnesse and unlust; for which the book sayth, Accursed be he that doth the service of God negligently. Than is accidie enemy to every estate of man; for certes the estate of man is in three maners: either it is the estate of innocence, as was the estate of Adam before that he fell into sinne, in which estate he was holden to werk, as in herying and adoring of God. Another estate is the estate of sinful men, in which estate men ben holden to labour in praying to God for amendement of hir sinnes, and that he wold graunt hem to rise out of hir sinnes. Another estate is the estate of grace, in which estate he is holden to werkes of penitence; and certes to all thise thinges is accidie enemie and contrary, for he loveth no besinesse at all. Now certes this soule sinne of accidie is eke a ful gret enemie to the livelode of the body, for it ne hath no purveaunce ayenst temporel necessitee, for it forsleutheth, forsluggeth, and destroieth all goodes temporel by recchelesnesse.

The fourth thing is that accidie is like hem that ben in the peine of helle because of hir slouthe and of hir hevinesse; for they that be damned ben so bound that they may neyther do wel ne think wel. Of accidie cometh first that a man is annoied and accombred to do any goodnesse, and that maketh that God hath abhomination of swiche accidie, as sayth Seint John.

Now cometh slouthe, that wol not suffre no hardnesse ne no penance; for sothly slouthe is so tendre and so delicat, as sayth Salomon, that he wol suffre non hardnesse ne penance, and therfore he shendeth all that he doth. Ayenst this roten sinne of accidie and slouthe shuld men exercise hemself, and use hemself to do good werkes, and manly and vertuously cachen corage wel to do, thinking that our Lord Jesu Crist quiteth every good deed, be it never so lite. Usage of labour is a gret thing, for it maketh, as sayth Seint Bernard, the labourer to have strong armes and hard sinewes, and slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre. Than cometh drede for to beginne to werke any good werkes; for certes he that enclineth to sinne, him thinketh it is to gret an emprise for to undertake the werkes of goodnesse, and casteth in his herte that the circumstances of goodnesse ben so grevous and so chargeant for to suffre that he dare not undertake to do werkes of goodnesse, as sayth Seint Gregorie.

Now cometh wanhope, that is despeir of the mercy of God, that cometh somtime of to moche outrageous sorwe, and somtime of to moche drede, imagining that he hath do so moche sinne that it wolde not availe him though he wolde repent him and forsake sinne, thurgh which despeire or drede he abandoneth all his herte to every maner sinne, as sayth Seint Augustine; which dampnable sinne, if it continue unto his end, it is cleped the sinne of the Holy Gost. This horrible sinne is so perilous that he that is despeired ther n'is no felonie, ne no sinne that he douteth for to do, as shewed wel by Judas. Certes aboven all sinnes than is this sinne most displesant and most adversarie to Crist. Sothly he that despeireth him is like to the coward champion recreant that flieth withouten nede. Alas! alas! nedeles is he recreant and nedeles despeired. Certes the mercy of God is ever redy to the penitent person, and is above all his werkes. Alas! cannot a man bethinke him on the Gospel of Seint Luke, chap. xv.; wheras Crist sayth, that as wel shal ther be joye in heven, upon a sinful man that doth penitence, as upon ninety-and-nine rightful men that neden no penitence? Loke further in the same gospel the joye and the feste of the good man that had lost his sone, whan his sone was returned with repentance to his fader. Can they

not remembre hem alſo (as ſayth Seint Luke, ch. xxiii.) how that the theſe that was honged beſide Jeſu Criſt ſayd, Lord, remembre on me whan thou comeſt in thy regne? Forſoth, ſaid Criſt, I ſay to thee to-day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradis. Certes ther is non ſo horrible ſinne of man that ne may in his lif be deſtroyed by penitence thurgh vertue of the paſſion and of the deth of Criſt. Alas! what nedeth man than to be deſpeired, ſith that his mercy is ſo redy and large? Axe and have. Than cometh ſompnolence, that is, ſluggy ſlumbring, which maketh a man hevy and dull in body and in ſoule, and this ſinne cometh of ſlouthe; and certes the time that by way of reſon man ſhuld not ſlepe is by the morwe, but if ther were cauſe reſonable; for ſothly in the morwe tide is moſt covenable to a man to ſay his prayers, and for to think on God, and to honour God, and to yeve almeſſe to the poure that comen firſt in the name of Jeſu Criſt. Lo, what ſayth Salomon? Who ſo wol by the morwe awake to ſeke me he ſhal find me. Than cometh negligence or recchelesneſſe, that recketh of nothing; and though that ignorance be mother of all harmes certes negligence is the norice: negligence ne doth no force whan he ſhal do a thing whether he do it wel or badly.

The remedie of thiſe two ſinnes is, as ſayth the wiſe man, that he that dredeth God ſpareth not to do that him ought to do; and he that loveth God he wol do diligence to pleſe God by his werkes, and abandon himſelf with all his might wel for to do: Than cometh idelneſſe, that is the yate of all harmes. An idel man is like to a place that hath no walles, theras deviles may enter on every ſide, or ſhoot at him at diſcoverte by temptation on every ſide: this idelneſſe is the thurrok of all wicked and vilains thoughtes, and of all jangeles, trifles, and all ordure: certes heven is yeven to hem that will labour, and not to idel folk: alſo David ſayth, They ne be not in the labour of men, ne they ſhul not ben whipped with men, that is to ſay, in Purgatorie: certes than ſemeth it they ſhul ben tormented with the devil in helle but if they do penance.

Than cometh the ſinne that men clepen *Tarditas*, as whan a man is latered or taryed or he wol tourne to God; and certes that is a gret folie: he is like him that falleth in the diche and wol not ariſe. And this vice cometh of falſe hope, that thinketh that he ſhal live long; but that hope failleth ful oft.

Than cometh Lacheſſe, that is he that whan he beginneth any good werk, anon he wol forlete it and ſtint, as don they that have any wight to governe, and ne take of him no more kepe, anon as they find any contrary or any annoy. Thiſe ben the newe ſhepherdes that let hir ſhepe wetingly go renne to the wolf that is in the breres, and do no force of hir owen governance. Of this cometh poverte and deſtruction both of ſpirituel and temporel thinges: than cometh a maner coldneſſe that freſeth all the herte of man; than cometh undevotion, thurgh which a man is ſo blont, as ſayth Seint Bernard, and hath ſwiche langour in his ſoule, that he may neyther rede ne ſing in holy chirche, ne here ne thinke of no devotion, ne travaile with his hondes in no good werk, that it n'is to him unſavory and all appalled: than wereth he ſluggiſh and ſlombry, and ſone wol he be wroth, and ſone is he inclined to hate and to envie: than cometh the ſinne of worldly ſorwe, ſwiche as is cleped *Triſtitia*, that ſleth a man as ſayth Seint Poule; for certes ſwiche ſorwe werketh to the deth of the ſoule and body alſo, for therof cometh that a man is annoied of his owen lif, wherfore ſwiche ſorwe ſhorteth the lif of many a man, or that his time is come by way of kinde.

Remedium Accidie

Ayenſt this horrible ſinne of accidie, and the braunches of he ſame, ther is a vertue that is called *Fortitudo* or Strength, that is, an affection thurgh which a man deſpiſeth noyous thinges. This vertue is ſo mighty and ſo vigorous, that it dare withſtond mightily, and wraſtle ayenſt the aſſautes of the devil, and wiſely kepe himſelf fro periles that ben wicked, for it enhaunſeth and enforceth the ſoule, right as accidie abateth and maketh it feble; for this *fortitudo* may endure with long ſufferance the travailles that ben covenable.

This vertue hath many ſpices: the firſt is cleped Magnanimitee, that is to ſay, gret corage; for certes ther behoveth gret corage ayenſt accidie, leſt that it ſwalowe the ſoule by the ſinne of ſorwe, or deſtroy it with wanhope. Certes this vertue maketh folk to undertake hard and grevous thinges by hir owen will wiſely and reſonably. And for as moche as the devil fighteth ayenſt man more by queinteſſe and ſleight than by ſtrength, therfore ſhal a man withſtond him by wit, by reſon, and by diſcretion. Than ben ther the vertues of feith, and hope in God and in his ſeintes, to acheven and accomplice the good werks, in the which he purpoſeth fermely to continue. Than cometh ſeuretee or ſikerneſſe, and that is whan a man ne douteth no travaile in time coming of the good werkes that he hath begonne: than cometh magnificence, that is to ſay, whan a man doth and performeth gret werkes of goodneſſe that he hath begonne, and that is the end why that men ſhuld do good werkes, for in the accompliſhing of good werkes lieth the gret guerdon: than is ther conſtance, that is ſtableneſſe of corage, and this ſhuld be in herte by ſtedfaſt feith, and in mouth, and in bering, in chere and in dede. Eke ther ben mo ſpecial remedies ayenſt accidie, in divers werkes, and in conſideration of the peines of helle, and of the joyes of heven, and in truſt of the grace of the Holy Goſt, that will yeve him might to performe his good entent.

De Avaritia.

After accidie wol I ſpeke of avarice and of coveti-ſe; of which ſinne Seint Poule ſayth, The rote

of all harmes is coveitiſe; for ſothly whan the herte of man is confounded in itſelf and troubled, and that the ſoule hath loſt the comfort of God, than ſeketh he an idel ſolas of worldly thinges.

Avarice, after the deſcription of Seint Auguſtine, is a likerouſneſſe in herte to have erthly thinges. Som other folk ſayn that avarice is for to purchaſe many erthly thinges, and nothing to yeve to hem that han nede. And underſtond wel that avarice ſtandeth not only in land ne catel, but ſom time in ſcience and in glorie, and in every maner outrageous thing, is avarice: and the difference betwene avarice and coveteiſe is this; coveteiſe is for to coveit ſwiche thinges as thou haſt not, and avarice is to withholde and kepe ſwiche thinges as thou haſt without rightful nede. Sothly this avarice is a ſinne that is ful dampnable, for all holy writ curſeth it, and ſpeketh ayenſt it, for it doth wrong to Jeſu Criſt, for it bereveth him the love that men to him owen, and tourneth it backward ayenſt all reſon, and maketh that the avaricious man hath more hope in his catel than in Jeſu Criſt, and doth more obſervance in keping of his treſour than he doth in the ſervice of Jeſu Criſt; and therfore ſayth Seint Poule, that an avaricious man is the thraldome of idolatrie.

What difference is ther betwix an idolaſtre and an avaricious man, but that an idolaſtre peravénture ne hath not but o maumet or two, and the avaricious man hath many? for certes every florein in his coffre is his maumet: and certes the ſinne of maumetrie is the firſt that God defended in the ten commandments, as bereth witneſſe, *Exod.* ch. xx.: Thou ſhalt have no falſe goddes before me, ne thou ſhalt make to thee no graven thing. Thus is an avaricious man that loveth his treſour before God an idolaſtre. And thurgh this curſed ſinne of avarice and coveitiſe cometh thiſe hard lordſhips thurgh which men ben diſtreined by tallages, cuſtomes, and cariages, more than hir dutee or reſon is; and eke take they of hir bondmen amercementes, which might more reſonably be called extortions than amercementes; of which amercementes, or ranſoming of bondmen, ſom lordes ſtewardes ſay that it is rightful; for as moche as a cherl hath no temporel thing that it ne is his lordes as they ſay. But certes thiſe lordſhippes don wrong, that bereven hir bondmen thinges that they never yave hem. *Auguſtinus de Civitate Dei, libro* ix. Soth is that the condition of thraldom, and the firſt cauſe of thraldom was for ſinne. *Geneſis* v.

Thus may ye ſee that the gilt deſerved thraldom, but not nature; wherfore thiſe lordes ne ſhuld not to moche glorifie hem in hir lordſhipes, ſith that they by naturel condition ben not lordes of hir thralles, but that thraldom came firſt by the deſerte of ſinne. And furtherover, ther as the lawe ſayth that temporel goodes of bondfolk ben the goodes of hir lord, ye, that is for to underſtond, the goodes of the emperour, to defend hem in hir right, but not to robbe hem ne to reve hem; therfore ſayth Seneca, The prudent ſhuld live benignely with the thral, tho that thou clepeſt thy thralles ben Goddes peple; for humble folk ben Criſtes frendes; they ben contubernial with the Lord thy king.

Thinke alſo that of ſwiche ſeed as cherles ſpringen, of ſwiche ſeed ſpringen lordes: as wel may the cherl be ſaved as the lord. The ſame deth that taketh the cherl ſwiche deth taketh the lord; wherfore I rede do right ſo with thy cherl as thou woldeſt that thy lord did with thee if thou were in his plight. Every ſinful man is a cherl to ſinne. I rede thee, thou lord, that thou reule thee in ſwiche wiſe that thy cherles rather love thee than drede thee. I wote wel that ther is degree above degree, as reſon is, and ſkill is, that men do hir devoir ther as it is due; but certes extortion and deſpit of your underlinges is dampnable.

And furthermore, underſtond wel that thiſe conqueroures or tyrantes maken ful oft thralles of hem that ben borne of as royal blood as ben they that hem conqueren. This name of Thraldom was never erſt couthe til that Noe ſayd that his ſone Cham ſhuld be thrall to his brethren for his ſinne. What ſay we than of hem that pille and don extortions to holy chirche? Certes the ſwerd that men yeven firſt to a knight whan he is newe dubbed ſignifieth that he ſhuld defend holy chirche, and not robbe it ne pille it; and who ſo doth is traitour to Criſt: as ſaith Seint Auguſtine, Tho ben the devils wolves that ſtrangelen the ſhepe of Jeſu Criſt, and don worſe than wolves; for ſothly whan the wolf hath full his wombe he ſtinteth to ſtrangle ſhepe, but ſothly the pillours and deſtroiers of holy chirches goodes ne do not ſo, for they ne ſtint never to pille. Now, as I have ſayd, ſith ſo is that ſinne was firſt cauſe of thraldom, than is it thus, that at the time that all this world was in ſinne, than was all this world in thraldom and in ſubjection: but certes ſith the time of grace came, God ordeined that ſom folk ſhuld be more high in eſtate and in degree, and ſom folk more lowe, and that everich ſhuld be ſerved in his eſtate and his degree: and therfore in ſom contrees ther as they ben thralles whan they have tourned hem to the feith they make hir thralles free out of thraldom; and therfore certes the lord oweth to his man that the man oweth to the lord. The Pope clepeth himſelf Servant of the ſervants of God; but for as moche as the eſtate of holy chirche ne might not have ben, ne the commun profite might not have be kept, ne pees ne reſt in erthe, but if God had ordeined that ſom men have higher degree and ſom men lower, therfore was ſoveraintee ordeined to kepe and mainteine, and defend, hire underlinges or hire ſubjectes in reſon, as ferforth as it lieth in hire power, and not to deſtroy hem ne confound; wherfore I ſay that thilke lordes that ben like wolves, that devoure the poſſeſſions or the catel of poure folk wrongfully, withouten mercy or meſure, they ſhul receive by the ſame meſure that they have meſured to poure folk the mercy of Jeſu Criſt, but they it amende. Now cometh deceit betwixt marchant and marchant. And thou ſhalt underſtond that marchandiſe is in two maners, that on is bodily, and that other is goſtly; that on is honeſt and leful, and that other is diſhoneſt and

unleful. The bodily marchandiſe, that is leful and honeſt, is this, that ther as God hath ordeined that a regne or a contree is ſuffiſant to himſelf, than it is honeſt and leful that of the haboundance of this contree men helpe another contree that is nedy; and therfore ther muſt be marchants to bring fro on contree to another hir marchandiſe. That other marchandiſe that men haunten with fraude, and trecherie, and deceit, with leſinges and falſe othes, is right curſed and dampnable. Spirituel marchandiſe is proprely ſimonie, that is, ententif deſire to buy thing ſpirituel, that is, thing which apperteineth to the ſeintuarie of God, and to the cure of the ſoule. This deſire, if ſo be that a man do his diligence to performe it, al be it that his deſire ne take non effect, yet it is to him a dedly ſinne, and if he be ordered he is irregular. Certes ſimonie is cleped of Simon Magus, that wold have bought for temporel catel the yefte that God had yeven by the Holy Goſt to Seint Peter and to the apoſtles; and therfore underſtond ye, that both he that ſelleth and he that byeth thinges ſpirituel ben called Simoniackes, be it by catel, be it by procuring, or by fleſhly praier of his frendes, fleſhly frendes or ſpirituel frendes, fleſhly in two maners, as by kinrede or other frendes; fothly if they pray for him that is not worthy and able it is ſimonie, if he take the benefice, and if he be worthy and able ther is non. That other maner is whan man or woman prayeth for folk to advancen hem only for wicked fleſhly affection, which they have unto the perſons, and that is foule ſimone; but certes in ſervice, for which men yeven thinges ſpirituel unto hir ſervants, it muſt be underſtonde that the ſervice muſt be honeſt or elles not, and alſo that it be without bargaining, and that the perſon be able; for (as ſayth Seint Damaſcen) All the ſinnes of the world, at regard of this ſinne, ben as thing of nought, for it is the gretteſt ſinne that may be after the ſinne of Lucifer and of Anticriſt; for by this ſinne Ged forleſeth the chirche and the ſoule, which he bought with his precious blood, by hem that yeven chirches to hem that ben not digne, for they put in theves, that ſtelen the ſoules of Jeſu Criſt, and deſtroyen his patrimonie. By ſwiche undigne preeſtes and curates han lewed men leſſe reverence of the ſacraments of holy chirche; and ſwiche yevers of chirches put the children of Criſt out, and put into chirches the divels owen ſones; they ſellen the ſoules that lambes ſhuld kepe to the wolf, which ſtrangleth hem, and therefore ſhall they never have part of the paſture of lambes, that is, in the bliſſe of heven. Now cometh haſardrie, with his apertenauntes, as tables and raſles, of which cometh deceit, falſe othes, chidings, and all raving, blaſpheming, and reneying of God, hate of his neyghbours, waſt of goodes, miſpending of time, and ſomtime manſlaughter. Certes haſardours ne mow not be without gret ſinne. Of avarice comen eke leſinges, theft, falſe witneſſe, and falſe othes; and ye ſhul underſtonde that theſe be gret ſinnes, and expreſſe ayenſt the commandements of God, as I have ſayd. Falſe witneſſe is eke in word and in dede; in word, as for to bereve thy neighbours good name by thy falſe witneſſe, or bereve him his catel or his heritage by thy falſe witneſſing, whan thou for ire, or for mede, or for envie, bereſt falſe witneſſe, or accuſeſt him, or excuſeſt thyſelf falſely. Ware, ye queſtmongers and notaries! certes for falſe witneſſing was Suſanna in ful gret ſorwe and peine, and many another mo. The ſinne of theft is alſo expreſſe ayenſt Goddes heſt, and that in two maners, temporel and ſpirituel. The temporel theft is as for to take thy neighbours catel ayenſt his will, be it by force or by ſleight, be it in meting or meſure, by ſteling, by falſe enditements upon him, and in borowing of thy neighbours catel in entent never to pay it ayen, and ſemblable thinges. Spirituel theft is ſacrilege, that is to ſay, hurting of holy thinges, or of thinges ſacred to Criſt, in two maners; by reſon of the holy place, as chirches or chirches hawes; (for every vilains ſinne that men don in ſwiche places may be called ſacrilege, or every violence in ſemblable places) alſo they that withdrawe falſely the rentes and rightes that longen to holy chirche; and plainly and generally, ſacrilege is to reve holy thing fro holy place, or unholy thing out of holy place, or holy thing out of unholy place.

Remedium Avaritiæ.

Now ſhul ye underſtond that releving of avarice is miſericorde and pitee largely taken. And men might axe why that miſericorde and pitee are releving of avarice? Certes the avaricious man ſheweth no pitee ne miſericorde to the nedeful man, for he deliteth him in the keping of his treſour, and not in the reſcouing ne releving of his even Criſten: and therfore ſpeke I firſt of miſericorde. Than is miſericorde (as ſayth the philoſophre) a vertue by which the corage of man is ſtirred by the miſeſe of him that is miſeſed; upon which miſericorde foloweth pitee, in performing and fulfilling of charitable werkes of mercie, helping and comforting him that is miſeſed. And certes this meveth a man to miſericorde of Jeſu Criſt, that he yave himſelf for our offence, and ſuffred deth for miſericorde, and foryaf us our original ſinnes, and therby releſed us fro the peine of hell, and amenuſed the peines of Purgatory by penitence, and yeveth us grace wel to do, and at the laſt the bliſſe of heven. The ſpices of miſericorde ben for to lene, and eke for to yeve, and for to foryeve and releſe, and for to have pitee in herte, and compaſſion of the miſcheſe of his even Criſten, and alſo to chaſtiſe ther as nede is. Another maner of remedy ayenſt avarice is reſonable largeſſe; but ſothly here behoveth the conſideration of the grace of Jeſu Criſt, and of the temporel goodes, and alſo of the goodes perdurable that Jeſu Criſt yave to us, and to have remembrance of the deth which he ſhal receive, he wot not whan; and eke that he ſhal forgon all that he hath, ſave only that which he hath diſpended in good werkes.

But for as moche as ſom ſolk ben unmeſurable, men oughten for to avoid and eſchue fool-largeſſe, the whiche men clepen Waſte. Certes he that is fool-large he yeveth not his catel, but he leſeth his his catel: ſothly what thing that he yeveth for vaine glorie, as to minſtrals, and to folk that bere his renoune in the world, he hath do ſinne therof, and non almeſſe: certes he leſeth foule his good that ne ſeketh with the yefte of hir good nothing but ſinne: he is like to an hors that ſeketh rather to drink drovy or troubled water than for to drink water of the clere well: and for as moche as they yeven ther as they ſhuld nat yeven, to hem appertaineth thilke maliſon that Criſt ſhal yeve at the day of dome to hem that ſhul be dampned.

De Gulâ.

After avarice cometh glotonie, which is expreſſe ayenſt the commandement of God. Glotonie is unmeſurable appetit to ete or to drinke, or elles to do in ought to the unmeſurable appetite and diſordeined coveitiſe to ete or drinke. This ſinne corrupted all this world, as is wel ſhewed in the ſinne of Adam and of Eve. Loke alſo what ſayth Seint Poule of glotonie: Many (ſayth he) gon, of which I have ofte ſaid to you, and now I ſay it weping, that they ben the enemies of the croſſe of Criſt, of which the end is deth, and of which hir wombe is hir God and hir glorie, in confuſion of hem that ſo ſerven erthly thinges. He that that is uſant to this ſinne of glotonie, he ne may no ſinne withſtond, he muſt be in ſervage of all vices, for it is the devils horde ther he hideth him and reſteth. This ſinne hath many ſpices: the firſt is dronkenneſſe, that is the horrible ſepulture of mannes reſon, and therfore whan a man is dronke he hath loſt his reſon; and this is dedly ſinne; but ſothly whan that a man is not wont to ſtrong drinkes, and peraventure ne knoweth not the ſtrength of the drinke, or hath febleneſſe in his hed, or hath travailled, thurgh which he drinketh the more, al be he ſodenly caught with drinke, it is no dedely ſinne but venial. The ſecond ſpice of glotonie is, that the ſpirit of a man wexeth all trouble for dronkenneſſe, and bereveth a man the diſcretion of his wit. The thridde ſpice of glotonie is whan a man devoureth his mete, and hath not rightful maner of eting. The fourthe is, whan thurgh the gret abundance of his mete the humours in his body ben diſtempered. The fifthe is foryetfulneſſe by to moche drinking, for which ſometime a man forgeteth by the morwe what he did over eve.

In other maner ben diſtinct the ſpices of glotonie, after Seint Gregorie. The firſt is for to ete before time; the ſecond is whan a man geteth him to delicate mete or drinke; the thridde is whan men taken to moche over meſure; the fourth is curioſitee, with gret entent to maken and appareille his mete; the fifth is for to ete gredily. Thiſe ben the five fingers of the devils hond, by which he draweth folk to the ſinne.

Remidium Gulæ.

Ayenſt glotonie the remedie is abſtinence, as ſayth Galien; but that I holde not meritorie, if he do it only for the hele of his body. Seint Auguſtine wol that abſtinence be don for vertue, and with patience. Abſtinence (ſayth he) is litel worth but if a man have good will therto, and but it be enforced by patience and charitee, and that men don it for Goddes ſake, and in hope to have the bliſſe in heven.

The felawes of abſtinence ben attemperance, that holdeth the mene in alle thinges; alſo ſhame, that eſcheweth all diſhoneſtee; ſuffiſance, that ſeketh no riche metes ne drinkes, ne doth no force of non outrageous appareilling of mete; meſure alſo, that reſtreineth by reaſon the unmeſurable appetit of eting; ſoberneſſe alſo, that reſtreineth the outrage of drinke; ſparing alſo, that reſtreineth the delicat eſe to ſit long at mete, wherfore ſom folk ſtanden of hir owen will whan they ete, becauſe they wol ete at leſſe leiſer.

De Luxuriâ.

After glotonie cometh lecherie, for thiſe two ſinnes ben ſo nigh coſins that oft time they wol not depart. God wote this ſinne is ful diſpleſant to God, for he ſaid himſelf, Do no lecherie; and therfore he putteth gret peine ayenſt this ſinne: for in the old lawe if a woman thrall were taken in this ſinne, ſhe ſhuld be beten with ſtaves to the deth, and if ſhe were a gentil woman ſhe ſhuld be ſlain with ſtones, and if ſhe were a biſhoppes doughter ſhe ſhuld be brent by Goddes commandement. Moreover, for the ſinne of lecherie God dreint all the world, and after that he brent five cities with thonder and lightning, and ſanke hem doun into hell.

Now let us ſpeke than of the ſaid ſtinking ſinne of lecherie, that men clepen Avoutrie, that is of wedded folk, that is to ſay, if that on of hem be wedded or elles both. Seint John ſayth, that avouterers ſhul ben in helle in a ſtacke brenning of fire and of brimſtone; in fire for her lecherie, in brimſtone for the ſtenche of hir ordure. Certes the breking of this ſacrament is an horrible thing; it was made of God himſelf in Paradis, and confirmed by Jeſu Criſt, as witneſſeth Seint Mathew in the Goſpel; A man ſhal let fader and moder, and take him to his wif, and they ſhal be two in on fleſh. This ſacrament betokeneth the knitting together of Criſt and holy chirche. And not only that God forbade avoutrie in dede, but alſo he commanded that thou ſhuldeſt not coveit thy neighbours wif. In this haſte (ſayth Seint Auguſtine) is forboden all maner coveitiſe to do lecherie. Lo, what ſayth Seint Mathew in the Goſpel, that who ſo ſeeth a woman to coveitiſe of his luſt, he hath don lecherie with hire in his herte. Here may ye ſee that not only the dede of this ſinne is forboden, but eke the deſire to don that ſinne. This curſed ſinne annoyeth grevouſly

hem that it haunt: and firſt to the ſoule, for he obligeth it to ſinne and to peine of deth, which is perdurable; and to the body annoyeth it grevouſly alſo, for it drieth him and waſteth and ſhent him, and of his blood he maketh ſacrifice to the fend of helle: it waſteth eke his catel and his ſubſtance; and certes if it be a foule thing a man to waſte his catel on women, yet is it a fouler thing whan that for ſwiche ordure women diſpenden upon men hir catel and hir ſubſtance. This ſinne, as ſayth the prophet, bereveth man and woman hir good fame and all hir honour; and it is ful pleſant to the devil, for therby winneth he the moſte partie of this wretched world: and right as a marchant deliteth him moſt in that chaffare which he hath moſt avantage and profite of, right ſo deliteth the fend in this ordure.

This is that other hond of the devil, with five fingers, to cacche the peple to his vilanie. The firſt fingre is the foole loking of the foole woman and of the foole man, that ſleth right as the baſilicok ſleth folk by venime of his ſight, for the coveitiſe of the eyen foloweth the coveitiſe of the herte. The ſecond fingre is the vilains touching in wicked maner; and therfore ſayth Salomon, that whoſo toucheth and handleth a woman he fareth as the man that handleth the ſcorpion, which ſtingeth and ſodenly ſleth thurgh his envenyming, or as who ſo that toucheth warme pitch it ſhendeth his fingers. The thridde is foule wordes, whiche fareth like fire, which right anon brenneth the herte. The fourth finger is kiſſing, and trewely he were a gret foole that wold kiſſe the mouthe of a brenning oven or of a fourneis; and more fooles ben they that kiſſen in vilainie, for that mouth is the mouth of helle; and namely thiſe olde dotardes holoures, which wol kiſſe and flicker, and beſie hemſelf though they may nought do: certes they ben like to houndes, for an hound whan he cometh by the roſer or by other buſhes, though ſo be that he may not piſſe, yet wol he heve up his leg and make a contenance to piſſe. And for that many men weneth that he may not ſinne for no likerouſneſſe that he doth with his wif, trewely that opinion is falſe; God wot a man may ſlee himſelf with his own knif and make himſelf dronken of his owen tonne. Certes be it wif, be it childe, or any worldy thing, that he loveth before God, it is his maumet, and he is an idolaſtre. A man ſhuld love his wif by diſcretion, patiently and attemprely and than is ſhe as though it were his ſuſter. The fifth fingre of the divels hond is the ſtinking dede of lecherie. Trewely the five fingers of glotonie the fend putteth in the wombe of a man, and with his five fingers of lecherie he gripeth him by the reines for to throwe him into the fourneis of helle, ther as they ſhul have the fire and the wormes that ever ſhul laſten, and weping and wayling, and ſharpe hunger and thurſt; and griſlineſſe of divels whiche ſhul all to-trede hem withouten reſpite and withouten ende. Of lecherie, as I ſayd, fourden and ſpringen divers ſpices; as fornication that is betwene man and woman which ben not maried, and is dedly ſinne, and ayenſt nature. All that is enemy and deſtruction to nature is ayenſt nature. Parfay the reaſon of a man eke telleth him wel that it is dedly ſinne, for as moche as God forbad lecherie; and Seint Poule yeveth hem the regne that n'is dewe to no wight but to hem that don dedely ſinne. Another ſinne of lecherie is, to bereven a maid of hire meidenhed, for he that ſo doth, certes he caſteth a mayden out of the higheſt degree that is in this preſent lif, and bereveth hire thilke precious fruit that the boo kclepeth the Hundreth Fruit; I ne can ſay it non otherwiſe in Engliſh, but in Latine it highte *Centeſimus fructus*. Certes he that ſo doth is the cauſe of many damages and vilanies mo than any man can reken: right as he ſomtime is cauſe of all damages that beſtes do in the feld that breketh the hedge of the cloſure, thurgh which he deſtroyeth that may not be reſtored; for certes no more may maidenhed be reſtored than an arme that is ſmitten fro the body may returne ayen and wexe: ſhe may have mercy, this wot I wel, if that ſhe have will to do penitence, but never ſhal it be but that ſhe is corrupte. And all be it ſo that I have ſpoke ſomwhat of avoutrie, it is good to ſhewe the periles that longen to avoutrie, for to eſchewe that foule ſinne. Avoutre, in Latine, is for to ſaye, approching of another mannes bedde, thurgh whiche tho that ſomtime were on fleſhe abandone hir bodies to other perſons. Of this ſinne, as ſayth the wiſe man, folow many harmes: firſte breking of feith: and certes feith is the key of Criſtendom, and whan that key is broken and lorne ſothly Criſtendom is lorne, and ſtont vaine and without fruit. This ſinne alſo is theft, for theft generally is to reve a wight his thinges ayenſt his will. Certes this is the ſouleſt theft that may be whan that a woman ſteleth hire body from her huſbond, and yeveth it to hire holour to defoule it, and ſteleth hire ſoule fro Criſt and yeveth it to the devil: this is a fouler theſte than for to breke a chirche and ſtele away the chalice; for thiſe avouterers breken the temple of God ſpirituelly, and ſtelen the veſſell of grace, that is, the body and the ſoule, for whiche Criſte ſhal deſtroy hem, as ſayth Seint Poule. Sothly of this theft douted gretly Joſeph, whan th[illegible] his lordes wif prayed him of vilainie, whan he ſayde, Lo, my Lady, how my Lord hath take to me under my warde all that he hath in this world, ne nothing is out of my power but only ye, that ben his wif: and how ſhuld I then do this wickedneſſe, and ſinne ſo horribly ayenſt God and ayenſt my Lord? God it forbede! Alas! all to litel is ſwiche trouth now yſounde! The thridde harme is the filth thurgh which they breke the commandement of God and defoule the auter of matrimonies, that is Criſt; for certes inſo moche as the ſacrament of mariage is ſo noble and ſo digne, ſo moche is it the greter ſinne for to breke it, for God made mariage in Paradis, in the eſtate of innocencie, to multiplie mankinde to the ſervice of God, and therfore is the breking therof the more grevous, of which breking come falſe heires oft time, that wrongfully occupien folkes heritages, and therfor wol Criſt put hem

out of the regne of heven, that is heritage to good folk. Of this breking cometh eke oft time that folk unware wedde or ſinne with hir owen kindrede; and namely thiſe harlottes that haunten bordelles of thiſe foul women that may he likened to a commune gong wheras men purge hir ordure What ſay we alſo of puteurs, that live by the horrible ſinne of puterie, and conſtrein women to yelde hem a certain rent of her bodily putrie, ye, ſomtime his owen wif or his childe, as don thiſe baudes? Certes thiſe ben curſed ſinnes. Underſtond alſo that avourie is ſet in the ten commandements betwene theft and manſlaughter, for it is the greteſt theft that may be, for it is theft of body and of ſoule: and it is like to homicide, for it kerveth atwo and breketh atwo hem that firſt were made on fleſh; and therfore by the old lawe of God they ſhuld be ſlaine, but natheleſſe by the lawe of Jeſu Criſt, that is the lawe of pitee, whan he ſayd to the woman that was found in avoutrie, and ſhuld have be ſlain with ſtones, after the will of the Jewes, as was hir lawe, Go, ſaid Jeſu Criſt, and have no more will to do ſinne. Sothly the vengeance of avoutrie is awarded to the peine of helle, but if ſo be that it be diſcombered by penitence. Yet ben ther mo ſpices of this curſed ſinne, as whan that on of hem is religious, or elles both; or of folk that ben entered into ordere, as ſub-deken, deken, or preeſt, or hoſpitalers; and ever the higher that he is in ordre the greter is the ſinne. The thinges that gretely agrege hir ſinne is the breking of hir avow of chaſtitee whan they received the ordre. And moreover, ſoth is that holy ordre is cheſe of all the treſorie of God, and is a ſpecial ſigne and marke of chaſtitee, to ſhew that they ben joined to chaſtitee, which is the moſte precious lif that is. And thiſe ordered folk ben ſpecially titled to God, and of the ſpecial meinie of God, for which whan they don dedly ſinne they ben the ſpecial traitours of God and of his peple, for they live by the peple to praye for the peple, and whiles they ben ſwiche traitours hir prayeres availe not to the peple. Preeſtes ben as angels as by the myſterie of hir dignitee; but forſoth Seint Poule ſaith that Sathanas transfourmeth him in an angel of light. Sothly the preeſt that haunteth dedly ſinne he may be likened to an angel of derkneſſe transfourmed into an angel of light; he ſemeth an angel of light, but for ſoth he is an angel of darkneſſe. Swiche preeſtes be the ſones of Hely, as is ſhewed in the Book of Kinges that they were the ſonnes of Belial, that is the divel. Belial is to ſay withouten juge, and ſo faren they; hem thinketh that they be free, and have no juge, no more than hath a free boll, that taketh which cow that him liketh in the toun. So faren they by women, for right as on free boll is ynough for all a toun, right ſo is a wicked preeſt corruption ynough for all a pariſh or for all a countree. Thiſe preeſtes, as ſayth the book, ne cannot miniſter the myſterie of preeſthood to the peple, ne they knowe not God, ne they hold hem not apaied, as ſaith the book, of ſodden fleſh that was to hem offred, but they take by force the fleſh that is raw. Certes right ſo thiſe ſhrewes ne hold hem not apaied of roſted fleſh and ſodden with which the peple feden hem in gret reverence, but they wol have raw fleſh, as folkes wives and hir doughters. And certes thiſe women that conſenten to hir harlotrie don gret wrong to Criſt and to holy chirche, and to all halowes and to all ſoules, for they bereven all thiſe hem that ſhuld worſhip Criſt and holy chirche, and pray for Criſten ſoules; and therfore han ſwiche preeſtes, and hir lemmans alſo that conſenten to hir lecherie, the maliſon of the court Criſten til they come to amendement. The thridde ſpice of avoutrie is ſomtime betwixt a man and his wif, and that is whan they take no regard in hir aſſembling but only to hir fleſhly delit, as ſaith Seint Jerome, and ne recken of nothing but that they ben aſſembled becauſe they ben maried: all is good ynough, as thinketh to hem. But in ſwiche folk hath the divel power, as ſaid the angel Raphael to Tobie, for in hir aſſembling they putten Jeſu Criſt out of hir herte, and yeven themſelf to all ordure. The fourth ſpice is of hem that aſſemble with hir kindrede, or with hem that ben of an affinitee, or elles with hem with which hir fathers or hir kinred have deled in the ſinne of lecherie: this ſinne maketh hem like to houndes, that taken no kepe of kindrede. And certes parentele is in two maners, eyther goſtly or fleſhly; goſtly is for to delen with hir godſibbes; for right ſo as he that engendreth a child is his fleſhly father, right ſo is his godfather his father ſpirituel, for which a woman may in no leſſe ſinne aſſemble with hire godſib than with hire owen fleſhly broder. The fifthe ſpice is that abhominable ſinne of which abhominable ſinne no man unneth ought to ſpeke ne write, natheles it is openly reherſed in holy writ. This curſedneſſe don men and women in diverſe entent and diverſe maner: but though that holy writ ſpeke of horrible ſinne, certes holy writ may not be defouled, no more than the ſoſine that ſhineth on the myxene. Another ſinne apperteineth to lecherie that cometh in ſleping, and this ſinne cometh often to hem that ben maidens, and eke to hem that ben corrupt and this ſinne men call Pollution, that cometh of four maners: ſomtime it cometh of languiſhing of the body, for the humours ben to ranke and haboundant in the body of man; ſomtime of infirmitee, for febleneſſe of the virtue retentif, as phiſike maketh mention; ſomtime of ſurfet of met and drinke; and ſomtime of vilains thoughtes that ben encloſed in mannes minde whan he goth to ſlepe, which may not be withouten ſinne, for whiche men muſt kepe hem wiſely, or elles may they ſinne ful grevouſly.

Remedium Luxurie.

Now cometh the remedy ayenſt lecherie, and that is generally chaſtitee and continence; that reſtraineth all diſordinate mevings that comen of fleſhly talents, and ever the greter merite ſhal he have that moſt reſtraineth the wicked enchauſing

or ardure of this ſinne; and this is in two maners, that is to ſay, chaſtitee in mariage and chaſtitee in widewhood. Now ſhalt thou underſtonde that matrimony is leful aſſembling of man and woman that receiven by vertue of this ſacrement the bonde thurgh whiche they may not be departed in all hir lif, that is to ſay, while that they live bothe. This, as ſaith the book, is a ful gret ſacrement; God made it (as I have ſaid) in Paradis, and wold himſelf be borne in mariage; and for to halowe mariage he was at a wedding wheras he tourned water into wine, whiche was the firſt miracle that he wrought in the erthe before his diſciples. The trewe effect of mariage clenſeth fornication, and repleniſheth holy chirche of good lignage, for that is the ende of mariage, and chaungeth dedly ſinne into venial ſinne betwene hem that ben wedded, and maketh the hertes all on of hem that ben ywedded as wel as the bodies. This is veray mariage that was eſtabliſhed by God er that ſinne began, whan naturel lawe was in his right point in Paradis; and it was ordeined that o man ſhuld have but o woman, and o woman but o man, as ſayth Seint Auguſtine, by many reſons.

Firſt, for mariage is figured betwix Criſt and holy chirche; and another is, for a man is hed of the woman, (algate by ordinance it ſhuld be ſo) for if a woman had mo men than on than ſhuld ſhe have mo hedes than on, and that were an horible thing before God; and alſo a woman mighte not pleſe many folk at ones; and alſo ther ſhuld never be pees ne reſt among hem, for everich of hem wold axe his owen right. And furthermore, no man ſhulde knowe his owen engendrure, ne who ſhuld have his heritage, and the woman ſhuld be the leſſe beloved for the time that ſhe were conjunct to many men.

Now cometh how that a man ſhuld bere him with his wif, and namely in two thinges, that is to ſay, in ſuffrance and in reverence, and this ſhewed Criſt whan he firſt made woman; for he ne made hire of the hed of Adam, for ſhe ſhuld not claime to gret lordſhippe, for ther as the woman hath the maiſtrie ſhe maketh to moche diſarray; ther nede non enſamples of this, the experience that we have day by day ought ynough ſuffice: alſo certes God ne made not woman of the foot of Adam, for ſhe ſhuld not be holden to lowe, for ſhe cannot patiently ſuffer; but God made woman of the rib of Adam, for woman ſhuld be ſclaw unto man. Man ſhuld bere him to his wif in feith, in trouth, and in love, as ſayth Seint Poule, that a man ſhuld love his wif as Criſt loved holy chirche, that loved it ſo wel that he died for it: ſo ſhuld a man for his wif, if it were nede.

Now how that a woman ſhuld be ſubget to hire huſbond that telleth Seint Peter: firſt in obedience; and eke, as ſayth the decree, A woman that is a wif, as long as ſhe is a wif, ſhe hath non auctoritee to ſwere ne bere witneſſe without leve of hire huſbonde, that is hire lord, algate he ſhuld be ſo by reſon: ſhe ſhulde alſo ſerve him in all honeſtee, and ben attempre of hire array. I wete wel that they ſhuld ſet hir entent to pleſe hir huſbonds, but not by queintiſe of hir array. Seint Jerom ſayth, Wives that ben appareilled in ſilke and precious purple ne mow not cloth hem in Jeſu Criſt: Seint Gregorie ſayth alſo, that no wight ſeketh precious array but only for vain glorie, to be honoured the more of the peple. It is a gret folie a woman to have a faire array outward and hireſelf to be foule inward. A wif ſhuld alſo be meſurable in loking, in bering, and in laughing, and diſcrete in all hire wordes and hire dedes, and above all worldly thinges ſhe ſhulde love hire huſbonde with all hire herte, and to him be trewe of hire body; ſo ſhuld every huſbond eke be trewe to his wif; for ſith that all the body is the huſbondes ſo ſhuld hire herte be alſo, or elles ther is betwix hem two, as in that, no parfit mariage. Than ſhul men underſtond that for three thinges a man and his wif fleſhly may aſſemble. The firſt is for the entent of engendrure of children, to the ſervice of God, for certes that is the cauſe final of matrimonie: another cauſe is to yelde eche of hem to other the dettes of hir bodies, for neyther of hem hath power of hir owen bodie: the thridde is for to eſchew lecherie and vilanie: the fourth is for ſoth dedly ſinne. As to the firſt, it is meritorie; the ſecond alſo, for, as ſayth the decree, She hath merite of chaſtitee that yeldeth to hire huſbond the dette of hire body, ye, though it be ayenſt hire liking and the luſt of hire herte. The thridde maner is venial ſinne. Trewely ſcarcely may any of thiſe be without venial ſinne for the corruption and for the delit therof. The fourth maner is for to underſtond, if the aſſemble only for amourous love and for non of the foreſaid cauſes, but for to accompliſh hir brenning delit, they recke not how oft, ſothly it is dedly ſinne; and yet with forwe ſom folk wol peine hem more to do than to hir appetit ſufficeth.

The ſecond maner of chaſtitee is for to be a clene widew, and eſchue the embracing of a man, and deſire the embracing of Jeſu Criſt. Thiſe ben tho that have ben wives, and have forgon hir huſbondes, and eke women that have don lecherie, and ben releved by penance: and certes if that a wif coud kepe hire all chaſt, by licence of hire huſbond, ſo that ſhe yeve no cauſe ne non occaſion that he agilted, it were to hire a grete merite. This maner of women, that obſerven chaſtitee, muſt be clene in herte as wel as in body, and in thought, and meſurable in clothing and in contenance, abſtinent in eting and drinking, in ſpeking, and in dede, and than is ſhe the veſſel of the boiſte of the bleſſed Magdeleine, that fulfilleth holy chirche of good odour. The thridde maner of chaſtitee is virginitee; and it behoveth that ſhe be holy in herte and clene of body; than is ſhe the ſpouſe of Jeſu Criſt, and ſhe is the lif of angels; ſhe is the preiſing of this world, and ſhe is as thiſe martirs in egalitee; ſhe hath in hire that tongue may not telle, ne herte thinke. Virginitee bare our Lord Jeſu Criſt, and virgin was himſelf.

Another remedie againſt lecherie is ſpecially to withdrawe ſwiche thinges as yeven occaſion to that vilanie, as eſe, eting, and drinking; for certes whan the pot boileth ſtrongly the beſt remedie is to withdrawe the fire. Sleping long in gret quiet is alſo a gret nourice to lecherie.

Another remedie ayenſt lecherie is, that a man or a woman eſchewe the compagnie of hem by which he douteth to be tempted; for all be it ſo that the dede be withſtonden, yet is ther gret temptation. Sothly a white wall, although it ne brenne not fully with ſticking of a candle, yet is the wall blak of the leyte. Ful oft time I rede that no man truſt in his owen perfection but he be ſtronger than Sampſon, or holier than David, or wiſer than Salomon.

Now after that I have declared you as I can of the Seven Deedly Sinnes, and ſom of hir braunches, and the remedies, ſothly if I coude I wold tell you the ten commandements; but ſo high doctrine I lete to divines: natheles I hope to God they ben touched in this tretiſe everich of hem alle.

Now for as moche as the ſecond part of penitence ſtant in confeſſion of mouth, as I began in the firſt chapitre, I ſay Seint Auguſtine ſaith, Sinne is every word and every dede, and all that men covetein, ayenſt the law of Jeſu Criſt; and this is for to ſinne in herte, in mouth, and in dede, by the five wittes, which ben ſight, herieng, ſmelling, taſting or ſavouring, and feling. Now is it good to underſtond the circumſtances that agregen moche every ſinne. Thou ſhalt conſider what thou art that doſt the ſinne, whether thou be male or female, yonge or olde, gentil or thrall, free or ſervant, hole or ſike, wedded or ſingle, ordered or unordered, wiſe or foole, clerk or leculer, if ſhe be of thy kinred bodily or goſtly or non, if any of thy kinred have ſinned with hire or no, and many mo thinges.

Another circumſtance is this, whether it be don in fornication or in advoutrie or no, in maner of homicide or non, a horrible gret ſinne or ſmal, and how long thou haſt continued in ſinne. The thridde circumſtance is the place ther thou haſt don ſinne, whether in other mennes houſes or in thin owen, in feld, in chirche, or in chirchhawe, in chirche dedicate or non; for if the chirche be halowed, and man or woman ſpille his kinde within that place, by way of ſinne or by wicked temptation, the chirche were enterdited til it were reconciled by the biſhop; and if it were a preeſt that did ſwiche vilanie, the terme of all his lif he ſhuld no more ſing maſſe; and if he did he ſhuld do deedly ſinne at every time that he ſo ſong maſſe. The fourthe circumſtance is by whiche mediatours, as by meſſagers, or for entecement, or for conſentment, to bere compagnie with felawſhip, for many a wretche for to bere felawſhip wol go to the divel of helle; wherfore they that eggen or conſenten to the ſinne ben partners of the ſinne, and of the dampnation of the ſinner. The fifth circumſtance is, how many times that he hath ſinned, if it be in his minde, and how oft he hath fallen; for he that oft falleth in ſinne he deſpiſeth the mercy of God, and encreſeth his ſinne, and is unkind to Criſt, and he waxeth the more feble to withſtand ſinne, and ſinneth the more lightly, and the later ariſeth, and is more ſlow to ſhrive him, and namely to him that hath ben his confeſſour; for which that folk, whan they fall ayen to hir old folies, either they forleten hir old confeſſour al utterly, or elles they departen hir ſhrift in divers places: but ſothly ſwiche departed ſhrift deſerveth no mercie of God for hir ſinnes. The ſixte circumſtance is, why that a man ſinneth, as by what temptation, and if himſelf procure thilke temptation, or by exciting of other folk, or if he ſinne with a woman by force or by hire owen aſſent, or if the woman maugre hire hed have ben enforced or non; this ſhal ſhe tell, and wheder it were for coveitiſe or poverte, and if it were by hire procuring or non, and ſwiche other thinges. The ſeventh circumſtance is, in what maner he hath don his ſinne, or how that ſhe hath ſuffered that folk have don to hire: and the ſame ſhal the man tell plainly, with all the circumſtances, and wheder he hath ſinned with commun bordel women or non, or don his ſinne in holy times or non, in faſting times or non, or before his ſhrift, or after his later ſhrift, and hath peraventure broken therby his penance enjoined, by whos helpe or whos conſeil, by ſorcerie or crafte; all muſt be told. All thiſe thinges, after that they ben gret or ſmale, engreggen the conſcience of man or woman. And eke the preeſt that is thy juge may the better be aviſed of his jugement in yeving of penance, and that ſhal be after thy contrition: for underſtond wel that after the time that a man hath defouled his baptiſme by ſinne, if he wol come to ſalvation, ther is non other way but by penance, and ſhrifte, and ſatisfaction; and namely by tho two, if ther be a confeſſour to whom he may ſhrive him, and that he firſt be veray contrite and repentant, and the thridde if he have lif to performe it.

Than ſhal a man loke and conſider that if he wol make a trewe and a profitable confeſſion ther muſt be foure conditions. Firſt, it muſt be in ſorowful bitterneſſe of herte, as ſayth the King Ezechiel to God, I wol remember all the yeres of my lif in the bitterneſſe of my herte. This condition of bitterneſſe hath five ſignes; the firſt is that confeſſion muſt be ſhamefaſt, not for to covern ne hide his ſinne, but for he hath agilted his God and defouled his ſoule: and hereof ſayth Seint Auguſtin, The herte travaileth for ſhame of his ſinne, and for he hath gret ſhamefaſtneſſe he is digne to have gret mercie of God. Swiche was the confeſſioun of the Publican that wold not heve up his eyen to heven, for he had offended God of heven, for which ſhamefaſtneſſe he had anon the mercy of God; and therefore ſaith Seint Auguſtine, that ſwiche ſhamefaſt folk ben next foryevenеſſe and mercy. Another ſigne is humilitee in confeſſion, of whiche ſayth Seint Peter, Humbleth you under the might of God; the hond of God is mighty in confeſſion, for therby God foryeveth thee thy ſinnes, for he alone hath the power. And

this humilitee ſhal be in herte and in ſigne outwarde; for right as he hath humilitee to God in his herte, right ſo ſhuld he humble his body outward to the preeſt that ſitteth in Goddes place; for which in no maner, ſith that Criſt is ſoveraine, and the preeſt mene and mediatour betwixt Criſt and the ſinner, and the ſinner is laſt by way of reſon, than ſhuld not the ſinner ſitte as high as his confeſſour, but knele before him or at his feet, but if maladie diſtrouble it; for he ſhal not take kepe who ſitteth ther, but in whos place he ſitteth. A man that hath treſpaſſed to a lord, and cometh for to axe mercie and maken his accorde, and ſeeteth him doun anon by the lord, men wolde holde him outrageous, and not worthy ſo ſone for to have remiſſion ne mercy. The thridde ſigne is, that the ſhrift ſhuld be ful of teres, if men mowen wepe, and if they mowe not wepe with hir bodily eyen, than let hem wepe in hir herte: ſwiche was the confeſſion of Seint Peter, for after that he had forſake Jeſu Criſt he went out and wept ful bitterly. The fourth ſigne is that he ne lete not for ſhame to ſhrive him and ſhewe his confeſſion; ſwiche was the confeſſion of Magdeleine, that ne ſpared for no ſhame of hem that weren at the feſte to go to our Lord Jeſu Criſt, and beknowe to him hire ſinnes. The fifthe ſigne is, that a man or a woman be obeiſant to receive the penance that hem is enjoined, for certes Jeſu Criſt for the gilt of man was obedient to the deth.

The ſecond condition of veray confeſſion is, that it be haſtily don; for certes if a man hadde a dedly wound, ever the lenger that he taried to wariſhe himſelf the more wold it corrupt and haſte him to his deth, and alſo the wound wol be the werſe for to hele. And right ſo fareth ſinne that long time is in a man unſhewed; certes a man ought haſtily to ſhewe his ſinne for many cauſes; as for drede of deth, that cometh oft ſodenly, and is in no certain what time it ſhal be, ne in what place; and eke the drenching of o ſinne draweth in another; and alſo the lenger that he tarieth, the ferther is he fro Criſt; and if he abide to his laſt day ſcarcely may he ſhrive him, or remembre him of his ſinnes, or repent him for the grevous maladie of his deth. And for as moche as he ne hath in his lif herkened Jeſu Criſt whan he hath ſpoken unto him, he ſhal crie unto our Lord at his laſt day, and ſcarcely wol he herken him. And underſtonde that this condition muſte have foure thinges; firſt that the ſhrift be purveyed afore, and aviſed, for wicked haſt doth not profite; and that a man con ſhrive him of his ſinnes, be it of pride, or envie, and ſo forth, with the ſpices and circumſtances, and that he have comprehended in his minde the nombre and the gretneſſe of his ſinnes, and how longe he hath lien in ſinne, and eke that he be contrite for his ſinnes, and be in ſtedfaſt purpoſe (by the grace of God) never eſte to fall into ſinne; and alſo that he drede and countrewaite himſelf that he flee the occaſions of ſinne to which he is inclined: alſo thou ſhalt ſhrive thee of all thy ſinnes to o man, and not parcelmele to o man and parcelmele to another; that is to underſtonde, in entent to depart thy confeſſion for ſhame or drede, for it is but ſtrangling of thy ſoule; for certes Jeſu Criſt is entierly all good, in him is non imperfection, and therfore either he foryeveth all parfitly or elles never a dele. I ſay not that if thou be aſſigned to thy penitencer for certain ſinne that thou art bounde to ſhewe him all the remenant of thy ſinnes of whiche thou haſt ben ſhriven of thy curat but if it like thee of thyn humilitee; this is no departing of ſhrift: ne I ſay not, ther as I ſpeke of diviſion of confeſſion, that if thou have licence to ſhrive thee to a diſcrete and an honeſt preeſt, and wher thee liketh, and by the licence of thy curat, that thou ne mayeſt wel ſhrive thee to him of all thy ſinnes: but lete no blot be behind; let no ſinne be untolde as fer as thou haſt remembrance. And whan thou ſhalt be ſhriven of thy curat tell him eke all the ſinnes that thou haſt don ſith thou were laſte ſhriven: this is no wicked entente of diviſion of ſhrift.

Alſo the veray ſhrift axeth certain conditions. Firſt, that thou ſhrive thee by thy free will, not conſtreined, ne for ſhame of folk, ne for maladie, or ſwiche other thinges, for it is reſon that he that treſpaſſeth by his free will, that by his free will he confeſſe his treſpas, and that non other man telle his ſinne but himſelf; ne he ſhal not nay ne deny his ſinne, ne wrath him ayenſt the preeſt for amoneſting him to lete his ſinne. The ſecond condition is, that thy ſhrift be lawful, that is to ſay, that thou that ſhriveſt thee, and eke the preeſt that hereth thy confeſſion, be verailly in the feith of holy chirche, and that a man ne be not diſpeired of the mercie of Jeſu Criſt, as Cain and Judas were. And eke a man muſte accuſe himſelf of his owen treſpas, and not another; but he ſhal blame and wite himſelfe of his owen malice and of his ſinne, and non other: but natheles if that another man be encheſon or enticer of his ſinne, or the eſtate of the perſon be ſwiche by which his ſinne is agregged, or elles that he may not plainly ſhrive him but he tell the perſon with whiche he hath ſinned, than may he tell, ſo that his entent ne be not to backbite the perſon, but only to declare his confeſſion.

Thou ne ſhalt not alſo make no leſinges in thy confeſſion for humilitee, peraventure to ſay that thou haſt committed and don ſwiche ſinnes of which that thou ne were never gilty; for Seint Auguſtine ſayth, If that thou, becauſe of thin humilitee, makeſt a leſing on thyſelf, though thou were not in ſinne before yet arte thou than in ſinne thurgh thy leſing. Thou muſt alſo ſhew thy ſinne by thy propre mouth, but thou be dombe, and not by no letter; for thou that haſt don the ſinne thou ſhalt have the ſhame of the confeſſion. Thou ſhalt not eke peint thy confeſſion with faire and ſubtil wordes, to cover the more thy ſinne, for than begileſt thou thyſelf and not the preeſt: thou muſt telle it plainly, be it never ſo foule ne ſo horrible. Thou ſhalt eke ſhrive thee to a preeſt that is diſcrete to conſeille thee; and eke thou ſhalt not ſhrive thee for vaine glorie, ne for ypocriſie, ne for no cauſe, but only for the doute of Jeſu Criſt and

the hele of thy ſoule. Thou ſhalt not eke renne to the preeſt al ſodenly to tell him lightly thy ſinne, as who telleth a jape or a tale, but aviſedly and with good devotion; and generally ſhrive thee ofte: if thou ofte fall, ofte ariſe by confeſſion. And though thou ſhrive thee ofter than ones of ſinne which thou haſt be ſhriven of it is more merite; and, as ſayth Seint Auguſtine, Thou ſhalt have the more lightly releſe and grace of God both of ſinne and of peine. And certes ones a yere at the leſt way it is lawful to be houſeled, for ſothely ones a yere all things in the erthe renovelen.

Explicit ſecunda pars penitentiæ, et ſequitur tertia pars.

Now have I told you of veray confeſſion, that is the ſeconde part of penitence; the thridde part is ſatisfaction, and that ſtont moſt generally in almeſſe dede and in bodily peine. Now ben ther three maner of almeſſe; contrition of herte, wher a man offreth himſelf to God; another is to have pitee of the defaute of his neighbour; and the thridde is in yeving of good conſeil goſtly and bodily wher as men have nede, and namely in ſuſtenance of mannes food. And take kepe that a man hath nede of thiſe thinges generally; he hath nede of food, of clothing, and of herberow, he hath nede of charitable conſeilling and viſiting in priſon and in maladie, and ſepulture of his ded body. And if thou maieſt not viſite the nedeful in priſon in thy perſon, viſite hem with thy meſſage and thy yeftes: thiſe ben generally the almeſſes and werkes of charitee of hem that have temporel richeſſes or diſcretion in conſeilling. Of thiſe werkes ſhalt thou heren at the day of dome.

This almeſſe ſhuldeſt thou do of thy propre thinges, and haſtily and prively, if thou mayeſt; but natheles if thou mayeſt not do it prively thou ſhalt not forbere to do almeſſe though men ſee it, ſo that it be not don for thanke of the world, but only to have thanke of Jeſu Criſt; for, as witneſſeth Seint Mathewe, *chap.* v. A citee may not be hid that is ſette on a mountaine, ne men light not a lanterne to put it under a buſhell, but ſetten it upon a candleſticke, to lighten the men in the hous: right ſo ſhal your light lighten before men, that they mowe ſee your good werkes, and glorifie your fader that is in heven.

Now as for to ſpeke of bodily peine, it ſtont in praiers, in waking, in faſting, and in vertuous teching. Of oriſons ye ſhul underſtond, that oriſons or prayers is to ſay a pitous will of herte, that ſetteth it in God, and expreſſeth it by word outward to remeve harmes, and to have thinges ſpirituel and perdurable, and ſomtime temporel thinges; of which oriſons certes in the oriſon of the *Pater noſter* hath Jeſu Criſt encloſed moſt thinges: certes it is privileged of three thinges in his dignitee, for whiche it is more digne than any other prayer, for that Jeſu Criſt himſelf made it; and it is ſhort, for it ſhuld be coude the more lightly, and to hold it the more eſie in herte, and helpe himſelf the ofter with this oriſon, and for a man ſhuld be the leſſe wery to ſay it, and for a man may not excuſe him to lerne it, it is ſo ſhorte and ſo eſie, and for it comprehendeth in himſelf all good prayers. The expoſition of this holy prayer, that is ſo excellent and ſo digne, I betake to the maiſters of theologie; ſave thus moche wol I ſay, that whan thou prayeſt that God ſhuld foryeve thee thy giltes as thou foryeveſt hem that have agilted thee, be wel ware that thou be not out of charitee. This holy oriſon amenuſeth eke venial ſinne, and therfore it apperteineth ſpecially to penitence.

This prayer muſt be trewely ſayd, and in perfect feith, and that men prayen to God ordinately, diſcretely, and devoutly: and alway a man ſhal put his will to be ſubgette to the will of God. This oriſon muſt eke be ſayd with gret humbleſſe, and ful pure and honeſtly, and not to the annoyance of any man or woman: it muſt eke be continued with werkes of charitee: it availeth eke ayenſt the vices of the ſoule; for, as ſayth Seint Jerome, By faſting ben ſaved the vices of the fleſh, and by prayer the vices of the ſoule.

After this thou ſhalt underſtonde that bodily peine ſtont in waking; for Jeſu Criſt ſayth, Wake ye and pray ye that ye ne enter into wicked temptation. Ye ſhul underſtond alſo that faſting ſtont in three thinges, in forbering of bodily mete and drinke, in forbering of worldly jolitee, and in forbering of dedly ſinne; this is to ſay, that a man ſhall kepe him fro dedly ſinne with all his might.

And thou ſhalt underſtond alſo that God ordained faſting, and to faſting appertaineth foure thinges; largeneſſe to poure folk, gladneſſe of herte ſpirituel, not to be angry ne annoied, ne grutch for he faſteth, and alſo reſonable houre for to ete by meſure, that is to ſay, a man ſhal not ete in untime, ne ſit the longer at the table for he faſteth.

Than ſhalt thou underſtonde that bodily peine ſtont in diſcipline, or teching by word or by writing, or by enſample, alſo in wering of here or of ſtamin, or of habergeons, on hir naked fleſh for Criſtes ſake. But ware thee wel that ſwiche maner penances ne make not thin herte bitter or angry, ne annoied of thyſelf, for better is to caſt away thin here, than to caſt away the ſwetneſſe of our Lord Jeſu Criſt; and therfore ſayth Seint Poule, Clothe you as they that ben choſen of God in herte, of miſericorde, debonairtee, ſuffrance, and ſwiche maner of clothing, of which Jeſu Criſt is more pleſed than with the heres or habergeons.

Than is diſcipline eke in knocking of thy breſt, in ſcourging with yerdes, in kneling, in tribulation, in ſuffring patiently wronges that ben don to thee, and eke in patient ſuffring of maladies, or leſing of worldly cattle, or wif, or child, or other friendes.

Than ſhalt thou underſtond which thinges diſtourben penance, and this is in foure maners, that is, drede, ſhame, hope, and wanhope, that is, deſperation. And for to ſpeke firſt of drede; for which he weneth that he may ſuffer no penance, ther ayenſt is remedie for to thinke that bodily penance is but ſhort, and litel at regard of

the peine of helle, that is so cruel and so long, that it lasteth withouten ende.

Now ayenst the shame that a man hath to shrive him, and namely thise ipocrites, that wold be holden so parfit that they have no nede to shrive hem, ayenst that shame shuld a man thinke, that by way of reson he that hath not ben ashamed to do soule thinges, certes him ought not be ashamed to do faire thinges, and that is confessions. A man shuld also think that God seeth and knoweth al his thoughtes, and al his werkes, and to him may nothing be hid ne covered. Men shuld eke remembre hem of the shame that is to come at the day of dome to hem that ben not penetent in this present lif; for al the creatures in heven and in erthe, and in helle, shul see apertly all that they hiden in this world.

Now for to speke of the hope of hem that ben so negligent and slowe to shrive hem, that stondeth in two maners; that on is that he hopeth for to live long, and for to purchase moche richesse for his delit, and than he wol shrive him, and, as he sayth, he may, as him semeth, than timely ynough come to shrift; another is the furquedrie that he hath in Cristes mercie. Ayenst the first vice he shal thinke that our lif is in no sikernesse, and eke that all the richesse in this world ben in aventure, and passen as a shadowe on a wall; and as sayth Seint Gregorie, that it appertaineth to the gret rightwisnesse of God that never shal the peine stinte of hem that never wold withdrawe hem from sinne, hir thankes, but ever continue in sinne. For thilke perpetual will to don sinne shall they have perpetual peine.

Wanhope is in two maners; the first wanhope is in the mercie of God; that other is that they think that they ne might not long persevere in goodnesse. The first wanhope cometh of that, he demeth that he hath sinned so gretly and so oft, and so long lyn in sinne, that he shal not be saved. Certes ayenst that cursed wanhope shulde he thinke that the passion of Jesu Crist is more stronge for to unbinde than sinne is strong for to binde. Ayenst the second wanhope he shal thinke that as often as he falleth he may arisen again by penitence; and though he never so longe hath lyen in sinne, the mercie of Crist is alway redy to receive him to mercie. Ayenst that wanhope that he demeth he shuld not long persever in goodnesse he shal think, that the febleneśse of the devil may nothing do but if men wol suffre him; and eke he shal have strength of the helpe of Jesu Crist, and of all his chirche, and of the protection of angels, if him list.

Than shal men understonde what is the fruit of penance; and after the wordes of Jesu Crist it is an endeles blisse of heven, ther joye hath no contrariositee of wo ne grevance; ther all harmes ben passed of this present lif: ther as is sikernesse from the peines of helle; ther as is the blisful compagnie that rejoycen hem ever mo everich of others joye; ther as the body of man, that whilom was foule and derke, is more clere than the sonne; ther as the body that whilom was sike and freele, feble and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so hole, that ther ne may nothing appeire it; ther as is neither hunger, ne thurste, ne colde, but every soule replenished with the sight of the parfit knowing of God. This blisful regne mowe men purchase by poverte spirituel, and the glory by lowlinesse, the plentee of joye by honger and thurst, and the reste by travaile, and the lif by deth and mortification of sinne: to which lif he us bring that bought us with his precious blood! *Amen.*

Now preye I to hem alle that herken this litel tretise or reden it, that if ther be any thing in it that liketh hem that therof they thanken our Lord Jesu Crist, of whom procedeth alle witte and all godenesse; and if ther be any thing that displeseth hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unkonning, and not to my wille, that wold fayn have seyde better if I hadde had koning; for oure boke seyth, All that is written is written for oure doctrine, and that is myn entente: wherfore I beseke you mekely, for the mercie of God, that ye preye for me that Crist have mercie of me and foryeve me my giltes, [and namely of myn Translations and enditinges of worldly vanitees, the which I revoke in my retractions; as The Boke of Troilus, The Boke also of Fame, The Boke of The Five-and-twenty Ladies, The Boke of The Duchesse, The Boke of Seint Valentines Day of the Parlement of Briddes, The Tales of Canterbury, thilke that sounen unto sinne, The Boke of the Leon, and many an other Bokes, if they were in my remembraunce, and many a Song, and many a lecherous Lay, Crist of his grete mercie foryeve me the sinne! but of The translation of Boes of Consolation, and other Bokes of Legendes of Saints, and of Omelies, and Moralite, and Devotion, that thanke I oure Lord Jesu Crist and his blisful mother, and alle the seintes in heven, beseking hem that they fro hensforth unto my lyves ende sende me grace to bewaile my giltes, and to stodien to the savation of my soule,] and graunte me grace, of veray penance, confession and satisfaction to don in this present lif, thorgh the benigne grace of him that is King of kinges and Preste of alle prestes, that bought us with the precious blode of his herte, so that I mote ben on of hem atte the laste day of dome that shullen be saved; *Qui cum Deo patre et Spiritu sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen.*

THE COKE'S TALE OF GAMELYN.

Now lithin and liſtinith, and
Herkinith you aright,
And ye ſhullin herè me tell
You of a doughti knight.
Sir Johan of Boundis clepid was
This ilkè knight'is name;
Wele coudin he of noriture,
And eke of mochil game.
Thre ſonnis this knight had, and with
His bodi he them wan;
The eldeſt was a moche ſhrew,
And ſonè he began.
His brotherin lov'd thir fadir,
And of him were agaſt;
Th' eldiſt deſerv'd his fadir's curſe,
And had it at the laſt.
The godè knight his fadir did
Live ſo long and yore,
That Deth was comen him unto,
And handlid him full ſore.
The godè knight ycarid moch,
Sore ſike ther as he lay,
How that his childerin ſhuldè
Lyvin after his day.
He haddè ben widè where, but
Noon huſbondèe he was;
Allè the londe which that he had
It was veray purchas;
And fayn he woldè that it were
Dreſſid among them all,
That everich of them had his part
As it mightè befall.
Tho ſent he into the contrè
Aftir wiſè knightis,
To helpen dele his londis, and
Dreſſin them to rightis.
He ſent them word by letteris
That they ſhuldè hyè blyve
If that they wol ſpeken with him
While that he was on live.
Sone as thoſe knightis herden how
Thus ſekè that he lay,
Tho haddè they no mannir reſt
Nothir by night nor day
Tyll that they comin unto him,
Ther as he layd him ſtill,
Upon his deth'is bedde for to
Abidin Godd'is will.

Thus then ſaidin the godè knight,
Sek ther as he lay,
Lordis, I warnè you forſothe,
Withoutin any nay,
I may not lengir liven herè
In this ſorrowful ſtound,
For thorough Godd'is will ſupreme
Dethe drawith me to ground.
Ther ne was no one of them alle,
That herdin him aright,
That thei ne haddè mochil routh
Upon that ilke knight;
And ſeidè, Sir, for Godd'is love
Ne diſmayen you nought,
God may don botè of balè
Which that is now ywrcught.
Then anſwerid them the gode knight,
Sikè there as he lay,
Botè of balè God may ſend,
I wote it is no nay.
But I beſekè you knightis,
Al for the love of me,
Goith and dreſſith my londis
Among my ſonis thre.
And, frendis, for the love of God
Delith them nat amys,
And forgettith not Gamèlyn,
My yongè ſon that is.
Takith hedè unto that one
As wel as to that other;
Seldome ye ſeine any heir
That helpè woll his brother.
Tho lettin they the knighte liggin
Which that was not in hele,
And in thei wentin to counſaile
His londis for to dele;
For to delin them al too on
That was ther only thought,
And for that Gamèlyn yongiſt was
He ſhuldè havin nought.
Al the londè which that ther was
They delten it in two,
And letè Gamèlyn the yonge
Withouten londè go.
And everich of them ſeiden
Til othir fullè loude,
His bretherin mowe give him londe
Whan that he godis koude.

Whan they had delid the londis
After their owne will,
Tho camin they unto the knight
Ther as he lay full ſtill,
And toldin unto him anon
How that they hadd ywrought,
And the knight there as he ſeke lay
Ylikid it right nought.
Then ſeidè the knight angrily,
I ſware by Seint Martyn
For all that which ye have ydone
Yet is the londè myn.
For Godd'is love, my neighbouris,
Standeith ye allè ſtill,
And I woll delin my londe.
After myn ownè will.
Johan myn eldiſt ſone ſhall
Yhavè plowis five,
That was my fadir's heritage
While that he was on live;
And middilliſt ſonè ſhall
Five plowis have of lond
That I holpe for to gettin
With myn own rightè hond;
And all myn othir purchaſis
Of landis and of ledes,
That I bequethè Gamèlyn,
And alle my gode ſtedes.
And I beſeke you, gode men,
That lawis con of lond,
For Gamèlyn'is love that
Thus my bequeſt may ſtond.
Thus delid hath the gode knighte
His londè be his dai,
Right upon his deth'is beddè,
Sore ſike ther as he lay:
And ſone aftirwerdis he
Lay as a ſtonè ſtill,
And dyid whan the tymè came,
As it was Criſt'is will.
Anon aftir that he was dede,
And undir graſs ygrave,
Tho ſonè the eldir brothir
Begylid the yongè knave.
He tokin into his hondis
His londis and his lede,
And alſo Gamèlyn himſelf
To clothin and to fede.
He clothid him and feddè him
Evil and ekè wroth,
And letin his londis for fare,
And als his houſis both;
His parkis eke, and his wodis,
And diddè nothyng wel,
And ſithin he it aboughtè
On his own feire fell.
So longè tyme was Gamèlyn
In his brother's Hall,
For the ſtrengiſt of godè will
They doutidin him all.
There ne was none wight in that place,
Nothir yongè ne olde,
That woldè wrathin Gamèlyn
Were he nevir ſo bold.

Gamèlyn ſtode upon a day
In his brother'is yerde,
And he began with his hondè
To handilin his berde.
He thoughtin upon his londis,
That layin longe unfawe,
And alſo of his feire okis,
That dounè were ydrawe.
His parkis werin al brokin,
And al his deir reved;
Of allè his gode ſtedis noon
Was there with him beleved;
His houſis werein unhelid
And full evilly dight;
Tho thought this yongè Gamèlyn
It wentè not aright.
After camè his brothir in
Ywalkyng ſtatelich thare,
And ſeidè unto Gamèlyn,
What? is our metè yare?
Tho Gamèlyn ywrothid hym,
And ſwore by Godd'is boke,
Thou ſhalt y go bake, luke, thy ſelf;
I wol not be thy coke.
How, brothir Gamèlyn, quod he,
Thus anſweriſt me thou?
Thou ſpakiſt nevir ſoche a word
Yet as thou doiſt now.
By my faith, ſeidè Gamèlyn,
Now me it thinkith nède;
Of all the harmis that I have.
I nevir yit toke hede.
My parkis ben y brokin, and
My deir ben yreved;
Of myn harnis and my ſtedis
Noght is there me beleved.
Al that my fadir me bequethe
Al goith now to ſhame,
And therefore have thou Godd'is curſe,
Brothir John by thy name.
Than thus beſpakin his brothir,
That rapè was of vees,
Stondith ſtille, thou gadiling,
And holdith right thy pees:
Thou ſhaltè ben ful faign to have
Thy metè and thy wede.
What ſpekiſt thou, thou gadiling,
Of lond othir of lede?
Then ſeidè to him Gamèlyn,
The childè that was yinge,
Chriſt'is curſè mote he havin
That clepith me Gadlyng.
I am no wors gadlying than the,
Parde ne no wors wight,
But born I was of a lady,
And gottin of a knyght.
Ne durſt he not to Gamèlyn
Not oo fote ferthir go,
But clepid to him his meinè,
And ſeidè to them tho;
Goith and betith wele this boy,
And ravith him his wit,
And let him lere another time
To anſwering me bett.

Then ſeid the chyld, yong Gamèlyn,

. . . . . .

Chriſt'is curſè mote thou havin
What? brother art thou myn.
And if that I ſhal algatis
Y betin be anon,
Criſt'is curſè mote thou havin
But that thou be that one.
And right anon his brothir did,
In that his gret hete,
Makin his mein fett ſtavis,
This Gam lyn to bete.
Whan everich of them had a ſtaff
Into his hond nomin,
Gamèlyn was awar tho,
He forſaugh them comin.
Tho Gamèlyn ſaugh them comin
He lokid ovir all,
And was warè of a peſtil
Stodè undir the wall.
And Gamèlyn was fully light,
And thidir gan he lepe,
And droſſe all his brother's men
Right ſone on an hepe.
He lokid like a wild lion,
And laidin on gode wone;
Tho whan his brothir ſeyè that
He begann to gonne.
He fleigh up untill a loftè,
And ſhet the dorè faſt:
Thus Gamlyn with his peſtil
Mad them all agaſt
Somè for Gamèlyn'is love,
And ſome for his envie,
Allè withdrowen them to halves
Tho he began to pleie:
What now? ſeide Gamèlyn; brothir,
Evil motè ye the;
Wollè ye beginnin contek
And than ſo ſon ſle?
Gamlyn ſought his brothir tho
Whithir he was yflowe,
And ſaugh where that he lokid out
At a ſolere windowe.
Brothir, tho ſeidè Gamlyn,
Comith a litil nere,
And I wol techin the a plaie
Attè the bokillere.
His brothir to hym anſwerid,
And ſwore by Seint Richere,
While the peſtil is in thyn honde
I woll comin no nere.
Brothir, I woll makin the pece,
I ſwere by Criſt's ore;
Caſtith away the peſtil tho,
And wrathè the na more.
I mot nedis, ſeide Gamèlyn,
Wrathè me at onys,
For that thou woldiſt make thy men
To breikin my bonis.
Ne had I haddin meyn and might,
In myn ownè twey armes,
To have y puſhin them fro me
They would have done me harmes.

To Gamèlyn tho ſeidin his
Brothir; Be thou not wrothe,
For to ſein the havin harme
Me werin rightè lothe.
I ne did it not, my brothir,
But right for a fonding,
For to lokin if thou were ſtrong,
And art ſo very ying.
Come adoun then to me, quod he,
And graunt me my bone,
Of oo thing I wol aſkin the,
And we ſhul ſaughtè ſone.
Adoun then camin his brothir,
That ſikill was and fell,
And was ſwithè right ſore aghaſt
Of that ilkè peſtil.
He ſeidè, Brothir Gamèlyn;
Aſkè me now thy bone,
And loke that you me blamè, but
I graunte it full ſone.
Tho ſeiden yongè Gamèlyn;
Brothir mynè, I wiſs
And if we ſhullè ben at one
Thou muſt me graunte this:
Al that my fadir me bequethe,
While that he was on live,
Thou muſtè do me it to have,
If that we ſhul not ſtrive.
That thou ſhalt havè, Gamèlyn,
I ſwere by Criſt'is ore,
Al that thy fadir the bequethe,
Though thou woldiſt have more.
Thy londè, that now lyith lie,
Full well it ſhall be ſowe,
And thyne houſis yraiſid up
That now ben layd full lowe.
Thus ſeide the knight to Gamèlyn,
But only with his mouth,
And thoughtè but of falſèneſs,
As he right welè couth.
The knightè thoughtin on traiſon,
But Gam lyn on noon,
And went and kiſſid his brothir,
And then they were at oon.
Alas for yongè Gamelyn!
Nothing at all he wiſt
With ſwichè falſè traiſon
His brothir hath him kiſt.
Lithinith and leſtinith, and
Holdith you ſtille your tonge,
And ye ſhull herin ſtraunge talking
Of Gamèlyn the yonge.
There happid to be there beſide
Tryid a wraſtiling,
And therefore there was yſettin
A ram and als a ring.
And Gamèlyn was in a will
To wendè thereunto,
For to previn his mighte, and ſe
What that he couthè do.
Now brothir myne, quod Gamèlyn,
By holie Seint Richere
Thou muſtè nedis lene to night
Me a litil courſere,

That is freshè to the sporis,
Upon him for to ride;
I mustin on an errand go
A litil here beside.
Be God, seidè his brothir tho,
Of stedis in my stall
Goith and chosith the the best,
And sparith none of alle,
Of stedis or of courseris,
That stondith 'hem beside,
And tellith me, my gode brothir,
Whithur thou wiltè ride.
Herè besidis, brothir, is
Y cryid a wrastling,
And thereforè shallè ben y sett
A ram and als a ring.
Mochè worship it were sothly,
Brothir, unto us all
Might I the ram and als the ring
Bringin home to the Hall.
A stedè there was sadilid,
Smarth was it and eke flete;
Gamèlyn diddis a peire of
Sporis fast on his fete.
He sat his fote in the stirrop,
The stedè he bestrode,
And towardis the wrastilling
The yongè childè rode.
Tho Gamèlyn the yongè was
Riddin out at the gate,
The falsè knight his own brothir
Lokkid it aftir thate.
And he besoughtin Jesu Crist,
That is of hevin king,
That he mightè brekin his nek
In that ilk wrastiling.
Assone as Gamèlyn cam there
The wrastling placè was
He lightid down of the stede
And stodin on the gras.
And ther he herd a frankelyn
Weloway for to sing,
And beganin all bittirly
His handis for to wring.
Godè man, seidè Gamèlyn,
Why makist thou this fare?
Is ther no man that may you help
Out of this nicè care?
Alas! seidè this frankèlyn,
That evir I was bore!
For tweiè stalworthè sonis
I wene I have forlore.
A champion is in the place
That has wroughtin me sorow,
For he hath slayn my too sonis
But if that God them borrow.
I woldè givin ten poundis,
Be Jesu Crist, and more,
With the nonis I fondè a man
To handilin him sore.
Godè man, seidè Gamèlyn,
Wilt thou this welè done?
Holdè my hors while that my man
Ydrawith of my shone.
And helpe my man also to kepe
My clothis and my stede,
And I woll into the place gon
And loke how I may spede.
By God, seidè the frankelyn,
It shall right so be don,
I woll my silfin be thy man
To drawin of thy shone.
And wendè you into the place,
Swete Jesu Crist the spede,
And dredè not of thy clothis
Nor of thy godè stede.
Barefote and ungert Gamèlyn
Into the ringe came,
Allè that werin in the place
Hedin of him the name,
How he durstin aventure him
On him to don his might
That was so doughti a champion
In wrastling and in fight.
Upsterte tho the champion
Ful rapely right anon,
Towardis yongè Gamèlyn
He tho began to gon,
And seidè, Who is thy sadir,
And who is eke thy sire?
Forsothè thou art a gret sole
For that thou camist hire.
Anon Gamèlyn answerid
The stout champion tho,
Thou knewist full welè my sadir
Whilè that he couthè go:
Whilis that he was on live,
I swere by Seint Martyn,
Sir John of Boundis was his name,
And I am Gamèlyn.
Felawe, seidè the champion,
So evir mote I thrive,
I knew right welè thy sadir
While that he was on live;
And thy selfin, yonge Gamèlyn,
I will that thou it here,
Whiles thou wert a yongè boy
A mochè shrew thou were.
Then seidè yongè Gamèlyn,
And swore bi Crist'is ore,
Now am I oldir wox thou shalt
Y findin me a more.
Be God, seidè the champion,
Welcome motè thou be;
Come thou onys in my honde
Shaltin thou nevir the.
It was welè within the night,
And bright the mone shone,
Whan Gamèlyn and the champion
Togidir gan to gon.
The champion castè tornis
To Gamèlyn that was prest,
And Gamèlyn stodin stillè,
And bad him don his best.
Then seiden yongè Gamèlyn
Unto the champion,
Now that I have fully provid
Many tornis of thine,

Thou moſtin, ſeidè Gamelyn,
Prove oon or two of myn.
Gamelyn to the champion
Yede ſmartily anon,
Of al the tornis that he coude
He ſhewid him but one;
And keſt him on the liftè ſide
That thre ribbis to brak,
And thereunto his left armè,
That gaf a grettè crak.
Than ſeidè yongè Gamèlyn
Smertly to him anon,
Shall it be holdin for a caſt,
Or ellis go for none?
Bi God, ſeidè the champion,
Whedir ſo that it be,
He that ones comith in thyn hand
Shallin he nevir the.
Than ſeidè the frankèlyn, that
Thre ſonis there had lore,
Bleſſid be thou, yongè Gamèlyn,
That ever thou were bore!
For now unto the champion
This have I for to ſeie,
This is the yongè Gamèlyn
That taughtè the to pleie.
Ayen anſwerde the champion,
That likid nothyng well,
He is allè their maiſtir, and
His pleiè is right fell.
Sithin that I wriſtilid firſt
It is agon full yore,
But I was nevir in my liſe
Handilid ſo before.
Yonge Gamèlyn ſtode in the place
Allone withouten ferk,
And ſeide, If there be any mo
Let them comè to werk.
The champion which that painid
Him to workin ſo ſore,
It ſemith by his countinaunce
That he willè no more.
Gamèlyn in the placè ſtode
Stillè as any ſtone
For to abidin wraſtiling,
But there ycomith none.
There ne was none with Gamèlyn
That woldè wreſtle more,
For he handilid the champion
So wonderouſly ſore.
Two gentilmeinè that owned the place
Come to Gamelyn, God geve them grace!
And ſeidè to him, Have done on
Thy hoſin and thy ſhone;
Forſothè at this timè all
This faire it is ydone.
Tho ſeidè to them Gamèlyn,
So mote I well yfare,
I havè not yet halvindele
Yſoldè all my ware.
Than ſeide the champion ſo broke,
I may it welè ſwere
He is a fole that therof bieth,
Thou ſelleſt it ſo dere.

Tho ſeide to him the frankèlyn,
That was in mochill care,
Fellaw, he ſaidè, whi lakkiſt
Thou ſo moche of his ware?
Be Seint Jame, that in Galis is,
That many man has fought,
Yet it is moche too godè chepe
That thou haſten ybought.
Tho that the wardinis werin
Of that ilk wraſtiling
Comin forth, and brought Gamèlyn
The ram and als the ring.
And thus wann yongè Gamèlyn
The ram and eke the ring,
And wentè forth with mochil joy
Homeward in the morning.
His brothir ſe where that he come
With all the grettè rout,
And bad the porter ſhute the gate,
And holdin him without.
The porter of his lord'is word
Was ſo right ſore agaſt,
And ſtert anon unto the gate
And lokkid it full faſt.
Now lithinith and leſtinith
Bothè yongè and old,
And ye ſhullin herè gamin
Of Gamelyn the bold.
Gamèlyn cometh theruntò
For to have comen in;
But all in vaine; the dore then was
Y ſhitt faſt with a pyn.
Than ſeidè yongè Gamèlyn,
Porter, undo the yate,
For many a godè mann'is
Sonnè ſtondith thereat.
Then anſwerid him the porter,
And ſwore by Godd'is berde,
Thou ne ſhalt, frènde Gamèlyn,
Comin into this yerde.
Thou lyiſt, ſeidè Gamèlyn,
So broukin I my chynne:
He ſmote the wikit with his fote,
And brak away the pyn.
The porter ſtreightwey faughè the
It might no bettir be,
He ſette fote on erthè, and
Faſt he began to fle.
Bi my faith, ſeidè Gamèlyn,
That travaile is ylore,
For I am on fote as light as
Thow, though thow had yſwore,
Gamelyn ovirtoke the porter,
And his teenè ywrak,
And gert him full upon the nek,
That he the bon to brak;
And toke him by that oon armè,
And threw him in a well;
Seven hundrid fadom it was dope,
As I have herdè tellè.
Whan Gamèlyn the yongè thus
Had yplaied his play,
Alle that in the yerdè were
Withdrewin them away.

That dredin him full forè for
The wreke that he wrought,
And for the fayir cumpany
That he had thither brought.
Yong Gamèlyn yede to the gate
And letè it up wide,
He letin in allè the rout
That gon woldin or ride;
And ſeidè, Ye ben ywelcome
Withouten any greve,
For we wol ben maiſteris here,
And aſkè no man leve.
It n'as but yeſterdai I laſt,
Saide yongè Gamèlyn,
In my brother'is ſeleris
Five toun of right gode wyne.
I willè not this cumpany
Partyn with me on twyn,
And if ye will don aftir me,
Whil any ſope is inn:
And if my brothir grutchith us,
Or makith it foulè chere,
Othir for ſpence of mete and drink
That we ſhull ſpendin here,
I am the ovircaterir,
And bere our althir purſe,
He ſhallè have for his grutching
Sanctæ Mariæ's curſe.
My brothir is but a nigon,
I ſwere by Criſt'is ore,
And we woll ſpendè largily
That he hath ſparid yore.
And whoſo that makith grutching
That we do here ydwell,
He ſhall go unto the porter
Into the drawè well.
Sevin dayis and ſevin nightes
Gamèlyn held his feſt,
With mochè ſolace that there was,
And eke no mannir heſte.
All in a litil torrit his
Brothir laydè yſteke,
And ſaugh him waſtin his godis,
But durſtè not to ſpeke.
Right erli in a morrowning,
Upon the eightè day,
The geſtis come to Gamèlyn,
And woldè gon thir way.
Lordis, tho ſeide Gamèlyn,
And wollin ye ſo hie?
Allè the wyn is not yet dronk,
So broukin I mine eye.
Yonge Gamèlyn in his hertè
Was ſorowfull and wo
Whan that his geſtis toke their leve
And fro him woldè go.
He woldè that they had dwellid
Lengir, and they ſeide Nay,
But bitaught Gamèlyn to God,
And bad him have gode dai.
Thus madè Gamèlyn his feſte,
And brought it well to end,
And aftirward his geſtis toke
Levè their way to wend.

Now lithinith and liſtinith,
And holdith you your tonge,
And ye ſhullin herè gamin
Of Gamèlyn tho yonge.
Herkinith, Lordilingis, and
Liſtinith you aright,
Whan all the geſtis weren gon
How Gamèlyn was dight.
Allè the while that Gamèlyn
Had hold his mangerie
His brothir thought on him bewreke
With his falſe trecherie;
Tho whan that Gamèlyn'is geſtes
Y ridin were and gon
Gamèlyn ſtode anon alone,
Frendè tho had he none.
Tho aftir this full ſone it fell,
Within a littil ſtound,
That Gamèlyn was takin, and
Full hardly was he bound.
Than forth comith the falſe knight
Out of the ſolerè,
And to Gamèlyn his brothir
He goith fullè nere,
And ſeiden unto Gamèlyn,
Who mede the ſo bold
For to deſtroyin and waſtè
The ſtore of my houſhold?
Brothir, anſwered Gamèlyn,
Now wrathè the right noght,
For it is many day agon
Sithins it was ybought:
For, brothir, thou haſtin haddè,
I ſwere by Seint Richere,
Of fiftene plowis of londè
This full ſixtenè yere;
And of allè the beſtis which
Thou haſtè forth ybredd,
That my fadir to me bequethe
Upon his deth'is bedd:
Of allè this full ſixtene yere
I gevè the the prow,
For the metè and the drinkè
That we have ſpendid now.
Than thus ſeidè the falſe knight,
(Full evil mote he the)
Herkinith, brothir Gamelyn,
What I woll gevin the;
For of my body, brothir, heir
Y gettin have I none;
I wollè makin the my heir,
I ſwerè by Seint John.
Par mafay, ſeidè Gamèlyn,
And if that it ſo be,
And thou thinkeſt as thou ſeyiſt,
May God yeldin it the!
Nothing wiſtè yong Gamèlyn
Of his brother'is gilè,
And therefore he him begilid
In verry littil while.
Gamèlyn, ſeiden he, o thing
I nedis muſt the tell,
Tho whan thou threwe my porter
Into the drawè well,

I ſworè in that wrathè, and
In that my gretè mote,
That thou ſhuldiſt ybondè be
Both hondè and eke fote:
And therefore I beſeèchè the,
My brother Gamèlyn,
Letith thou noght me be forſworn,
As brpthir art thou mine;
But letith me ybindin the
Both hondè and eke fote,
For me to holdin myne avough,
Right as I the behote.
Brothir, tho ſeide Gamèlyn,
As ſo I motin the,
Thou ſhaltè not ben forſworin
For the love of me.
Tho madin thei this Gamèlyn
To ſitte, might he not ſtand,
Tyll that he him ybondin had
Both fote and alſo hand.
The falſè knight his brothir of
Gamèlyn was agaſt,
And ſentè aftir fetteris
To fetterin him faſt.
His brothir madè leſingis
On him ther as he ſtode,
And toldè them that comin in
That Gamèlyn was wode.
Gamèlyn ſtode to a poſt
Y bondin in the Hall,
And tho that ther ycomin in
Lokid upon him all.
Evir ſtodè yong Gamèlyn
Evin bolte upright,
But mete nor drink ne had he none
Nowthir by day ne night.
Tho ſeidè yongè Gamèlyn,
Brothir myn, by my hals
Now I have wele eſpyid that
Thou art a parti fals.
Had I but wiſtè that treſon
That thou haddiſt yfond
I woldin have gevin ſtrokis
Or I had ben ybound.
Gamèlyn ſtodè thus bondin
As ſtill as any ſtone
For too dayis and too nightis,
And metè had he none.
Then ſeide at laſt this Gamèlyn,
That ſtodè boundin ſtrong,
Adam Spencer, methinkith that
I faſtè al to long;
Therefore, Adam le Diſpencer,
Now I beſeche the
For the mochè lovè with which
My fadir lovid the,
If thou may comin to the kaies,
Leſith me out of bond,
And for thi I woll departin
With the of my fre lond.
Than him anſwerid this Adam,
Which that was the Spencer,
I have yſervid thy brothir
This full ſixtenè yere,

And if I ſhuldè letin you
To gon out of his boure
He woldin afterwardis ſeye
That I were a traytour.
Adam, anſweryd Gamèlyn,
So brpukin I myn hals,
Thou ſhaltè findin my brothir
At the laſt fightè fals;
And therefore, brothir Adam, me
Loſè out of my bonds,
And I wollè departin with
The of myn own fre londs.
Upon ſo gode a forewardè
Saidin Adam, I wis
I wollè doin thereunto
Allè that in me is.
Adam, tho ſeidè Gamelyn,
As ſo mowin I the,
I woll holdè the covènaunt,
An thou too wollè me.
Anon as Adam his lordè
To beddè was ygone,
Adam tokè the kaies, and lat
Gamèlyn out anon.
He unlokid yonge Gamèlyn
Both hondis and eke fete,
On hope of the avaunceèment
Which that he him bèhete.
Then ſeidè yongè Gamèlyn,
Thankid be Godd'is ſonde,
For now that I am yloſid
Both fote and alſo hond!
Had I but etin a litil,
And thereto dronk aright,
There is non in this houſè that
Shuld bindè me this night.
Tho Adam tokè Gamelyn,
As ſtill as any ſtone,
And haddin him into the ſpence
Right rapily anon;
And ſettin him to his ſoupere
Right in a privie ſtede,
And badin hym do gladily,
And Gamelyn ſo dede.
Anon aſſone as Gamèlyn
Had etin wel and fine,
And thereunto had ydrankin
Well of the redè wyne,
Adam, ſeide yongè Gamèlyn,
Tell what is now thy rede;
For me to go to my brothir,
And gerdin of his hede?
No, Gamèlyn, ſeidin Adam,
It ſhallè not be ſo,
But I can tellè the a redè
That is yworth the too.
I wote wele forſothè that
(And this it is no nay)
We ſhullin have a mangerie
Rightè upon Sonday;
Of abbotis and priouris
Full many here ſhal be,
And othir men of holie cherch,
As I can tellè the;

Thou ſhaltè ſtond up by the poſt,
As thou were hondè faſt,
And I ſhall them leve unlok, that
Away thou may them caſt:
And whan that they have y etin,
And waſhin have their hondes,
Tho thou ſhalt beſpekin them all
To bring the out of bondes:
And if that they will borrow the
That werin a gode game,
Than werin thou out of priſon
And I als out of blame;
But if that evèrich of them
Sayè unto us Nay,
I ſhullè don anothir thing,
I ſwerè by this day.
Thou ſhullè have a godè ſtaffe,
And I woll have another,
And Criſt'is curſe have that oon
That failè ſhall that othir.
Ye, for God, ſeidè Gamèlyn,
I ſay it right for me
If that I failin on my ſide
Than evil mote I the.
If that we ſhullin algatis
Aſſoile them of thire ſynne;
Warnith me, my brothir Adam,
Whan that we ſhall begynn.
Now Gamèlyn, ſeiden Adam,
Ey Seintè Charitè
I wollè warnè the beforn
Whan that the time ſhall be.
Whan that I twinkin upon the
Lokè for to be gon,
And caſt away the fetteris,
And come to me anon.
Adam, ſeidè yong Gamèlyn,
Y bliſſid be thy bones!
That is a righrè gode counſaile
Y gevin for the nones.
If that they ſhullin wernè me
To bring the out of bendes
I wollè ſettin gode ſtrokis
Full right upon their lendes.
Tho the Sondy was ycomin,
And theſe folk to the feſte;
Faire they werein ywelcomid
Bothè the loſte and meſte.
And evir as they at the Hall
Dorè weré comin in
They evérich caſtin an eie
On yongè Gamèlyn.
The falſè knight his owu brothir,
So full of trecherie,
Allè the geſtes that there were
At that ilk mangerie
Of Gamèlyn his own brothir
He toldin them with mouth
Alle the harmis and the ſhame
That e'ere he tellè couth.
Tho thèy werein yſervid ſtreit
Of meſſis too or thre;
Than ſeidè yongè Gamèlyn,
How do ye ſervè me?

It ne is not wele yſervid,
Bè God that allè made,
That I ſhold ſittin here faſting
And othir men make glade.
The falſe knightè his brothir,
Thereas that he yſtode,
Toldin to allè his geſtis
That Gamèlyn was wode.
And Gamèlyn there ſtodè ſtill,
And anſwerid right noght,
But of Adam'is wordis he
Heldè ſtill in his thought.
Tho Gamèlyn began to ſpeke,
Right doulefully withall,
Unto the grettè lordis that
Y ſatyn in the Hall:
My Lordings, tho ſeiden he,
For Criſt'is paſſion
Helpin to bringè Gamèlyn
Out of thilkè priſon.
Than ſeidè to him an abbot,
(Sorow upon his cheke!)
He ſhallin have Criſt'is curſe
And Seintè Maries eke,
That ſhall the out of this priſon
Beggin owthir borow,
But evir worthè hym full wele
That doth the mykil ſorow.
And anon aftir that abbot
Than ſpekin anothir,
I woldè that thyn hede were of
Though thou were my brothir.
Allè that the ſhall borrowin
Motè them foulè fall;
And thus yſeiden allè they
That werin in the Hall.
Than ſeidè to him a priour,
Evil mowin he thrive!
It is grettè ſorow and care,
Boy, that thou art on live.
On, on, ſeidè yonge Gamèlyn,
So broukin I my bone,
Now that I havin eſpyid
That frendis have I none.
A curſid mot he worthè be,
Bothè fleſhè and blode,
That evir doth to priouris
Or abbotes any gode.
Anon Adam the Diſpencer
Takin up hath the cloth,
And lokid unto Gamèlyn,
And ſaugh that he was wroth.
Adam of the pantrie at thilk
Time litil he thought.
And too godè ſtavis unto
The Hallè dore he brought.
Adam lokid on Gamèlyn,
And he was war anon,
And caſt awaie the fetteris,
And began for to gon.
Tho he camin unto Adam,
He toke to the one ſtaff,
And beganning to werkè wele,
And gode ſtrokis he gaff.

Gamèlyn came into the Hall,
And Adam Spencer both,
And lokid them all aboutin
As they haddè ben wroth.
Gamèlyn ſprenith holi watir
All with an okin ſpige,
That ſome of them that ſtode upright
Fillin into the fire.
There was no mannir lewdè man
That in the Hall ſtode
That woldè doin Gamèlyn
Any thingè but gode.
But thei ſtodè beſidin, and
Let them bothè werch,
For thei ne haddè no routhè
Of men of holi cherch.
Of abbot or of prior, or
Of monk or of canon,
That Gamèlyn hath overtoke,
Anon they yedin doun.
There ne was none of them allè
That with his ſtuff ymette
That he made them overthrowe,
And quyttè them his dette.
Tho Gamèlyn, ſeidè Adam,
For Seinte Charite
Payith, I pray, gode liveray,
And for the love of me;
And I wollè kepin the dore;
So evir here I maſſe
Er that they ben aſſoilyid
Ther ſhallè noon ypaſſe.
Doute the noght, ſeide Gamèlyn;
While that we ben in fere;
But kepè thou welè the dore
And I woll werkin here;
Beſturrith the, gode Adam, and
Ne lettith none yſle,
And we ſhall tellè largily
How many here there be.
To Gamèlyn ſeiden Adam,
Doith them all but gode,
For thei ben men of holi cherch;
Drawith of them no blode;
Savith right welè the coroune,
And doith them no harmes,
But brekith bothè their leggis,
And ſithin here thir armes.
Thus Gamelyn and Adam hath
Y wroughtin rightè faſt,
And pleidin with the monkies tho,
And madè them agaſt.
Forth hidir they comè riding
Full jolily with ſwaines,
But home agen they werin ledde
In cartis and in waines.
Tho as they haddin all ydone
Than ſeidin a gray frere,
Alas! alas! my Lord Abbot,
What diddè we now here?
Tho that we hither did ycomè
It was a coldè rede;
Us had far better beh at home
With watir and with brede.

While Gamelyn made orderis
Of monkis and of frere
Evir ſtodè his brothir ſtille,
And madè foulè chere.
Tho Gamèlyn up with his ſtaff,
That he ful welè knew,
And grettin him upon the nek,
That he him overthrewe,
A litil above the girdil
The riggin bone to braſt,
And ſett him in the fetteris
There as he ſattin arſt.
Sittith thou there, my brothir John,
Tho ſeidè Gamèlyn,
For to colin thy hoote bodie,
As I did colè myn.
And ſwithe as they yhaddè welè
Wroken them on their ſone,
They aſkid for the watir, and
They wiſhin them anon.
What ſome of them for their lovè,
And ſomè for their awe,
Allè the ſervauntis ſervid
Them of the beſt law.
The ſhereff was thennis away
But about a five myle,
And all was toldin unto him
Within a little whyle,
How Gamèlyn and Adam had
Ydon a ſorry res;
Boundin and woundin many men
Agen the king's pece.
Eſtſonis tho begannin ſone
Striffe for to awake,
And the ſhiregereve about did
Caſt Gamèlyn to take.
Now lithinith and leſtinith,
So God geve you gode fine,
And ye ſhull herin a gode game
Of yongè Gamelyn.
Now four-and-twenty yongè men,
That holdin them full bolde,
Comin unto the ſhiregereve,
And ſeide that they wold
Both Gamèlyn and eke Adam
Y fettè be the way;
The ſhiregereve gafè them leve
Tho ſoth as I you ſay,
Thes yongè meinè hiden them
Faſt, wolde they not lynne
Tyll that they comin to the gatè
There Gamèlyn was inne.
Thy knokidin upon the gate,
The porter tho was nye,
And lokid forth out at an hole,
As man that was full ſlye
The porter had beholdin them
But for a litil while,
He lovid welè Gamèlyn,
And was adrad of gile,
And forthi letè the wiket
Y ſtondin fullè ſtill,
And aſkid them that ſtant without
What ywas their will?

For allè the gret cumpany
Than ſpake bot oue alone,
Undo the gatis, porter, and
Latè us in ygone.
Then ſeidè to them the porter,
So brouken I my chynne
Ye ſhullè ſayin your errand
Or that ye comin inne.
Say to Gamèlyn and Adam,
If that ther wille it be,
We wollè ſpekin here with them
Two wordis othir thre.
Fellaw, ſeidè the porter tho,
Stondith thou ther yſtill,
And I woll wend to Gamèlyn
To wetin of his wille.
And in wentè the porter tho
To Gamèlyn anon,
And ſeidè, Sire, I warne you
That here be come your ſone;
For lo! the ſhiregerev'is men
Now ben all at the gate
For to ytekin you bothè;
Shallè ye not eſcape.
Porter, tho ſeidè Gamèlyn,
So mote I welè the,
I woll allowè the thy wordes
Whan I my timè ſe.
Go ageyn, porter, to the gate,
And dwell with them a while,
Awaitin, and thou ſhaltè ſe
Right ſone, porter, a gile.
Adam, tho ſeidè Gamèlyn,
Lokè the to be gon,
We havè foomen at the gate,
And frendis nevir one.
It ben the ſhiregerev'is men
That hithir ben comin,
They ben yſwore togideris,
That we ſhull be nomin.
To Gamèlyn ſeidè Adam,
Hiè the righte belyve,
And if I failè the this day
Than evil mote I thryve.
And we ſhullin ſo welcomè
The ſhiregerev'is men,
That ſome of them I trow ſhall make
Their beddis in the fen.
Then thorough the poſternè gate
Yong Gamelyn out went,
And a gode ſturdie cartè ſtaffe
In his hondè he hent.
And Adam Spencer hentè ſone
Anothir grettè ſtaff
For to helpè young Gamèlyn,
And gode ſtrokis he gaffe.
Adam yfellid hath his tweyne,
And Gamèlyn felled thre,
The tothir ſettè on erth,
And faſt began to fle.
What? ſeidin Adam Spencer tho,
So evir hire I maſſe
I havè right gode reddè wyne,
Pray drinkith er ye paſſe.
Nai, nai! by God, ſeidè they tho,
Thy drink is nothing gode,
It woldè makin mann'is brayne
To lyin in his hode.
Yong Gamèlyn tho ſtodè ſtill,
And lokid him about.
And ſaide, The ſhiregereve comith
With a full grettè rout.
Adam Spencer, ſeid Gamèlyn,
My rede it is now this,
Abidin we not lengir here
Leſt we farin amys.
I rede that we to wode ygonn
Er that we be yfound;
Betir is there loſe for to gonn
Than in the tounè ybound.
Adam them tokè by the hond
This yongè Gamèlyn.
And echè of them to the othir
Drankin a draft of wyne.
And aftirwardis tokè their courſe,
And wentè ſtreight their way;
Tho fond the ſhiregereve the neſt,
But in it was nonè ay.
The ſhiregereve lightid adoune,
And went into the Hall,
And fond the lord yfetterid
Full faſtè therewithall.
The ſhireve tho unfetterid
Him right ſone anon,
And ſentin aftir a gode leche
To helè his riggè bon.
Letè we now this falſè knight
Lie in his mochill care,
And tellè we of Gamèlyn,
And lokè how he fare.
Gamèlyn into the wild wodè
Yſtalkid is full ſtille,
And Adam le Diſpencer it
Ylikid but right ille.
Tho Adam ſwore to Gamèlyn,
And that be Seint Richere,
Now I ſay that it is mery
To ben a diſpencer;
That muchè levire me werin
The kayis for to bere,
Than walkin in this wildè wode
My clothis all to tere.
Adam, ſeidè yong Gamèlyn,
Diſmayè the right noght,
For many a gode mann'is child
In carè is ybrought.
As they thus in the wode ſtodin,
Ytalking both in fere,
Adam herdè talking of men,
And nigh them thought they were.
Tho Gamèlyn undir the wild
Wodè lokid aright,
Full ſevin ſcore of yongè men
He ſaugh right wel ydight;
Allè were ſattè at their mete
In a compas about;
Adam, tho ſeidè Gamèlyn,
Now havin ye no doute,

For aftir balè comith bote,
Thorough Godd'is grete might;
Methinkith of mete and of drink
That I havin a fight.
Adam le Diſpencer lokid
Tho undir wode bowe,
And whan that he the metè ſaugh
Tho he was glad inowe;
For now he hopid unto God
For to havin his dele,
And he was ful ſore alongid
Aftir a godè mele.
Anon as he ſeide that word
Streight the maiſtir outlawe
Saugh Gamèlyn and Adam both
Undir the wodè ſhaw.
Lo! youngè men, ſeide the maiſtir
Outlaw, by the gode rode
I am aware of ſome geſtis,
Pray God ſendin us gode!
Loke! yondir be two yongè men
That ben right wel adight,
A! peradventure they ben mo,
Whoſo lokid aright.
Ariſeth up quick yongè men,
And fettè them to me,
For it is godè that we wetin
What meinè that they be.
Up thei ſtertin quik at that word,
Sevin fro the dinnere,
And they mettin with Gamèlyn
And Adam Diſpencere.
Whan that they werin ney to them
Than ſeidè thus that one,
Yeldith up to us, yonge men
Your bowis and your ſtone.
Than ſeidè to them Gamèlyn,
That yongè was of elde,
Ful mochil ſorow mote they have
That unto you ſhall yelde:
I curſe woll none othir wight
But right mine ownè ſelve
Tho ye may fettin unto you
Fyve, andthan be ye twelve.
They herdin by his wordis that
Gret might was in his arme,
And forthi there was non of them
That woldè don him harme,
But ſedin unto Gamèlyn
Right mildily and ſtill,
Comith aforin our maiſtir,
And ſay to him thy will.
Yongè man, ſeidè Gamèlyn,
Upon your leaute
Tellith what man your maiſter is
Which that ye with ybe.
Tho allè they anſwerid him
At ones without leſing,
Our maiſter is ycorounid
Of Outlawis is the King.
Adam, ſeide yongè Gamelyn,
Go we in Criſt'is name,
He may nothir metè nor drink
Y wernè us for ſhame;
And if that he hendè, and
Comin of gentil blode,
He woll geve us both mete and drink,
And doin us ſome goode.
By Seintè Jame, ſeide Adam tho,
What harme ſo that I grete
I will adventure me to the
Dorè that I had mete.
Tho Gamèlyn and Adam both
Y wentè forth in fere,
And they both gretè the maiſti r
Which that they fondè there.
Than ſeidè to them the maiſtir,
That King was of Outlawes,
What do ye ſeke, ye yongè men,
Undir the wodè ſhawes?
Yong Gamèlyn anſwerid tho
The King with his coroune,
He muſtè nedis walk in wodes
That may not walk in toune.
Sire, we walkè not here in wodes
Non harmè for to do,
But if paradventure we mete
A dere to ſherte thereto,
As meinè that ben right hungry,
And mow no metè fynd,
And very hardè ben beſtad
Undir the wodè lynd.
Of Gamèlyn'is wordis tho
The maiſter haddè routhe,
And ſeidè to them, Ye ſhall have
Inow, heve God my trouthe.
Anon he baddè them ſittin
Doune for to takè reſt,
And baddè them etin and drink,
And that too of the beſt.
As they were eting and drinking
Of the beſt wele and fine,
Than ſeide the ton to the tothir
This is yonge Gamèlyn.
Tho was the maiſter of outlawes
Into conſaile nomin,
And told how it was Gamèlyn
That thither was comin.
Anon as he had herdin all
How that it was befall,
He madè Gamèlyn maiſtir
Undir him o're them all.
Within the third weke aftir this
To him comith tiding,
To the maiſtir of outlawis,
Which that now was their king,
That he ſhuldè ycomin home,
For that his pees was made;
And of that joyfull tiding he
Was wonderouſly glade.
Tho ſeide he to his yongè men,
The ſothè for to tell.
To me be comin tidingis
I may no lengir dwell.
Tho was yong Gamèlyn anon,
Withoutin tarying,
Made maiſtir of outlawis, and
Y coroundid their king:

Tho was yong Gamèlyn crounid
The King of the Outlawes,
And among them walkid a while
Undir the wodè shawes.
The falsè knight his brothir now
Was shiregereve and Sire,
And lete his brothir be endite
For hatè and for ire.
Tho werin all his bondmeinè
Sory and nothing glad
Whan that Gamèlyn their lordè
Wolves Hede was cryed and made,
And sentin outè his meinè
Where they mightin him synd,
For to sekin yonge Gamèlyn
Undir the wodè lynd,
To tellè to him tidingis
The winde was ywent,
And allè his gode revied was,
And all his men yshent.
Whan that they haddè hym foundin
On kneys they them sette,
And adoun with their hodè, and
Gamèlyn their lord grette.
They seiden, Sire, now wrathè not
You for the gòdè rode,
For we have brought you tidingis,
But they be nothing gode.
Now is thy brothir shiregereve,
And he hath the baillie,
And thereto hath enditid the,
And Wolves Hede doth the crie.
Allas! tho seidè Gamèlyn,
That ere I was so slak,
That I ne hadd brokin his nek
Whan I his riggè brak.
Goith, and gretith you welè
My housbondis an wif,
I wollè ben at the next shire,
So havè God my lif.
Gamèlyn camè well redy
Unto the nextè shire,
And there the false knight his brothir
Was bothè Lord and Sire.
Gamèlyn camè boldilich
Into the Mote Hall,
And put adoun his hode among
The lordilingis all.
God savè you, Lordilingis!
Which that now herè be;
But as for the, brokebak shereve,
Evil motè thou the!
Why hastè thou doin to me
That shame and villonie
For to latin enditè me,
And Wolf'is Hede me crie?
Tho thought the falsè knight on him
For to have ben awreke,
And letè takin Gamèlyn;
Must he no more yspeke.
Mightè there be no mannir grace,
But Gamèlyn at last
Was into prisoun ycastin,
And fetterid full fast.

This Gamèlyn hath a brothir
That cleped was Sir Ote;
As gode and hend a knight he was
As mightin gon on fote.
Right anon yede a messager
Unto that gode knight,
And toldin him altogethir
How Gamèlyn was dight.
Anon as Sir Ote herdin had
How Gamèlyn was dight,
He was right passing sory tho,
Ne he was nothing light:
And letè saddle him a stede,
And streit the weie he name,
And unto his tweie bretherin
Right sonè there he came.
Sir, seidè this Sir Ote unto
The shiregerevè tho,
We ben but only thre brethren,
Shall we be nevir mo,
And thus hast thou yprisounid
The bestè of us all;
Soche anothir brothir as thou
Evil mote him befall!
Sir Ote, seidè the falsè knight,
Now letè be thy cars;
By God for these thi wordis he
Shallè farin the wors.
Now to the king'is prisoun he
Is lesully ynome,
And ther he shall abidin
Untill the justice come.
But parde, seide Sir Ote tho,
Bettir it shall ybe
I biddin him unto maynprise
And that thou grauntè me,
Untill the nextè sitting shall
Come of deliveraunce,
And than lete Gamèlyn fairely
Ystondin to his chaunce.
Brothir, in soche a forewardè
I takin him to the,
And by thy fadir'is soulè,
That the begat and me,
If that he be not right redy
Whan that the justice sitte,
Thou shaltè berin the judgement,
For all thy grette wit.
I grauntin it wele, seide Sir Ote,
That it shall so ybe;
Letith delivir him anon,
And takin him to me.
Tho Gamèlyn was delivered
To Sir Ote his brothir,
And that night ydwellid in fere
The ton with the tothir.
On the morow seide Gamèlyn
Unto Sir Ote the hend,
My brothir, he seidè, forsothe
I motè from the wend,
To lokin how my yongè men
In wode ledin their lif,
And whethir that they liven now
In joie or elles in strif.

Be God, tho anſwerid Sir Ote,
That is a coldè rede,
Now I ſe that alle the cark
Shall fallin on my hede;
For whan that the juſtice ſittith,
And thou be not yfound
I ſhall anon be takin, and
In thy ſtede be ybound.
Brothir, tho ſeidè Gamèlyn,
Diſmayè the right noght,
For be Seintè Jame in Galis,
That many man hath ſought,
If ſo that God Almighty hold
Me my lif and my wit
I wollè ben there right redy
Whan that the juſtice ſit.
Than ſeide Sir Ote to Gamèlyn,
God ſheldè the fro ſhame!
Comith whan that thou ſeiſt tyme,
And bring us out of blame.
Now lithinith and leſtinith,
And holdith you right ſtill,
And ye ſhullè herin how that
Gamèlyn had his will.
Anon Gamèlyn wentin his
Way undir the wode riſe,
And he yfondè there playing
His yongè men of priſe.
Tho was this yongè Gamèlyn
In hert right glad inow
Whan that he fond his yongè men
Undir the wodè bow.
Gamèlyn and his yongè men
Ytalkidin in fere,
And they all haddè right gode game
Their maiſtir for to here.
His men told him of aventures
Which that they had yfound,
And Gamèlyn told them agen
How he was faſt ybound.
All the while that Gamèlyn was
Outlaw had he no curs:
There ne was no man that for him
Yſerid ought the wors,
But abbotis and priouris,
And monkis, and chanon;
In them forſothe ne laſt he noght
Whan er he might them nom.
While Gamèlyn and his yong men
Ymadè mirthis ryve,
The falſè knight his own brothir,
Evil motè he thryve!
For all this while he waſt about,
Both one day and othir,
On purpoſe for to hire the queſt
To hangin his brothir.
Gamèlyn ſtodin on a day,
And round him he beheld
The wild wodis and the ſhawis
Within the wildè feld;
He thoughtin upon his brothir,
How that he him behete
That he ywoldin be redy
Whan that the juſtice ſete;
He thoughtin welè that he wolde,
Withoutin more delay,
Ycomin afore the juſtice
For to kepin his day;
And ſeidè to his yongè men,
Now dightith you full yare,
For whan that the juſtice ſittith
We mote nedis be there;
For I am undir a borow
Until that I comin,
And my brothir inſtedè of me
To priſon ſhal be nomin.
Be Scint Jame, ſeide his yongè men,
And that thou rede thereto,
Ordeinith how it ſhallè be,
And it ſhall ſo be do.
While Gamèlyn was ycoming
There that the juſtice ſatt
The falſè knight his own brothir
Forgattin he not that,
To hire the meinè on his queſt
To hangin his brothir,
And though thei haddè not that con
He wolde han that othir.
Tho comith yongè Gamèlyn
From undir the wode riſe,
And he broughtin along with him
His yongè men of priſe.
I ſe wele, ſeidè Gamèlyn,
The juſtice is yſette;
Go thou aforn us, Adam, and
Lokè how that it ſpette.
Adam wentè into the Hall,
And lokid all about,
And he ſaugh there yſtondè tho
Lordingis grette and ſtout,
And Sir Ote, Gamèlyn's brothir,
Yſterterid wele faſt;
Tho wentin Adam out of Hall
As he werin agaſt.
Adam ſeidè to Gamèlyn,
And to his felawes all,
Sir Ote yſtondith ſetterid
Within the Motè Hall.
Seide Gamèlyn, If God geve us
Gracè wel for to do
He ſhallin it abegge anon
That him broughtin thereto.
Then ſeidin Adam Diſpencer,
That lokkis haddin hore,
Chriſt's curſe motè he havin
That boundin him ſo ſore.
And if thou wiltè, Gamèlyn,
Doin aftir my rede,
There is none in the Hallè that
Shall bere aweie his hede.
Adam, tho ſeidè Gamèlyn,
We wollè not do ſo;
We woll ſle only the giltif,
And lat the othir go.
I will my ſelve into the Hall,
And hire the juſtice ſpeke,
And on all them that ben giltif
I wollè ben awreke.

Lat none eſcapin at the dore;
Take, yongè meinè, yeme,
For I wolle ben the juſtice
This day domis to deme.
Pray God ſpedè me this ilk dai
At this my newè werke!
And Adam, comith thou with me,
For thou ſhalt be my clerke.
His meinè all anſwerid him,
And bad hym don his beſt,
And if thou to us havè nede
Thou ſhalt fyndin us preſt:
For we wollè ſtondin with the
Whilis that we may dure,
And but that we werkin manly
Payith us then no hure.
Yongè men, ſeidè Gamèlyn,
So mot I wele y the,
As ye a right truſty maiſtir
Shullè findin of me.
And rightè thereat the juſtice
Yſattin in the Halle,
In wentè tho yong Gamèlyn
Boldly amonges them all.
Gamèlyn letè unfettir
His brothir out of bend;
Than ſeidè to him Sir Otis,
His brothir that was hendè,
Thou haddiſt almoſt, Gamèlyn,
Dwellid away to long,
For the queſtè is ygon out
On me that I ſhulde honge,
Brothir, tho ſeidè Gamèlyn,
God gevè me gode reſt,
This gode day they ſhull ben hongid
That ben upon the queſt;
And thereto the juſtice bothè,
That is the juggè man,
And eke the ſheriff our brothir,
For through him it began.
Than ſeidè yongè Gamèlyn
Unto the falſe juſtice,
Now is thi powir at an end,
You muſt nedis ariſe.
Thou haſt ygeyin domis that
Ben evil allè dight;
I wollè ſettin in thi ſete,
And dreſſin them aright.
But the juſtice ſattin ſtillè,
And roofè not anon,
And Gamèlyn with his ſwerdè
Clevid his chekè bone.
Yonge Gamèlyn toke him in his
Armis, and no more ſpak,
But threw him ovir the barrè,
And his armè to brak.
Durſt no one unto Gamèlyn
Sayè nothing but godè,
For fere of the gret company
That withoutin yſtode.
Gamèlyn ſattè him adoun
In the juſtic'is ſtedè,
(Herkenith now of the bourdè
That Gamèlyn tho dede)

And Sir Otè by him hę ſatte,
And Adam at his ſete.
And whan Gamèlyn the yong was
Satte in the juſtice ſete,
He letè fettè the juſtice
And his falſe brothir,
And letè them come to the barre
The ton with that othir.
Whan Gamèlyn had thus ydone
Haddin he tho no reſt
Till that he had enquerid who
Werin upon the queſt.
For to demin his brothir dere,
Sir Ote, for to be honge,
Er that he wiſte which they were
It thoughte him full longe.
But al ſo ſone as Gamèlyn
Wiſte where that thei were
He didde them everichone
Fetterin faſt in fere,
And bringè them unto the barre,
And fettè them in vewe:
By my faith, ſeidè the juſtice,
The ſheriff is a ſhrewe.
Than ſeidè yongè Gamèlyn
Unto the falſe juſtice,
Thou haſtè gevè thy domis
Al of the worſt aſſiſe;
And the twelve ſiſouris that
Werin of the inqueſt
They ſhulle ben hongid this day,
So God geve me good reſt.
Than ſeide the ſheriff pitouſly
To yongè Gamèlyn,
My Lord, I crie the mercie,
Brothir artè thou myn.
Therefore, ſeidè yonge Gamèlyn,
Havè you Criſt's curſe,
For if thou werin maiſtir yet
Shuldin I farè worſe.
But for to makè ſhort my Tale,
And not to tary longe,
He ordeynid him there a queſt
Of his own men ſo ſtrong.
The falſe juſtice and the ſheriff
Bothè were hongid hie,
To weyvin there with the ropis,
And with the winde drie.
And als the twelvè ſiſouris,
Sorow havè that rekk,
Allè they werin yhongid
Full faſtè by the nekk.
Thus endid hath the falſè knight
With all his trecherie,
That evir haddè lad his life
In falſeneſs and folie.
He was hongid up by the nek,
And nought by the purſe,
That was the mede that he had haddè
From his fadir'is curſe.
Sir Ote was the eldiſt tho,
And Gamèlyn was yonge,
They wentin with their frendis, and
Paſſidin to the king

They madin pece with the kingè
Of the beſtè aſſiſe;
The king lovid Sir Otè welè,
And made him a juſtice.
Aftir the king made Gamèlyn,
Bothè in eſt and weſt,
The cheſe juſtice and ridere of
Allè his fre foreſt.
Alle his wight yonge men the king
Forgafin them their gilt,
And ſithen in gode office the king
Hath allè them ypilt.
Thus has wan yongè Gamèlyn
His londè and his lede,
And wrake of him his enemies,
And quytè them their mede.

And Sir Otè, his brothir dere,
Ymade him hath his heir,
And ſithin weddid Gamèlyn
A wife both gode and faire.
They lividin togidir wele
Whilis that Chriſtè wolde,
And ſithin that was Gamèlyn
Ygravin undir molde:
And ſo ſhallè we allè here;
May there no man yſle
God bringin us unto the joie
That evir ſhull ybe!

Thus endith the legend of Gamelyn, called The Coke's Tale.

HERE BEGINNETH

THE PLOWMAN'S PROLOGUE.

The Plowman plucked up his plowe
Whan midſomer mone was comen in,
And ſaied his beſtes ſhould ete inowe,
And lige in graſſe up to the chin:
Thei ben feble both oxe and cowe,
Of 'hem n'is left but bone and ſkinne;
He ſhoke of ſhere, and coulter' off drowe,
And honged his harnis on a pinne.
He toke his tabarde and ſtaffe eke,
And on his hedde he ſet his hat,
And ſaied he would Sain& Thomas ſeke,
On pilgrimage he goth forth plat;
In ſcrippe he bare bothe bred lekes;
He was ſolſwonke and all forſwat:
Men might have ſene through both his chekes,
And every wang tothe where it ſat.
Our Hoſte behelde well all about,
And ſawe this man was ſunne ibrent;
He knewe well by his ſingid ſnout,
And by his clothes, that were to rent,
He was a man wont walke about,
He n'as not aye in cloiſter pent,
Ne couthe religiouſliche lout,
And therefore was he full ill ſhent.
Our Hoſte him axed, What man art thou?
Sire Hoſte, (quod he) I am an hine,
For I am wont to go to plow,
And erne my mete yet that I dine;
To ſwette and ſwinke I make avowe,
My wife and babes therewith to finde,
And ſervin God and I wiſt how,
But we lende men yben full blinde:
For clerkes ſaie we ſhullin be fain
For ther livelod to ſwette and ſwinke,
And thei right nought us give again
Neither to ete ne yet to drinke;
Thei mowe by lawe, as that thei ſain,
Us curſe and dampne to hell'is brinke;
And thus thei puttin us to pain
With candlis quient and bell'is clinke.
Thei make us thrallis at their luſt,
And ſain we mowe not els be ſaved;
Thei have the corne and we the duſt;
Who gainſayes then they ſaye he raved.
What, man! (quod our Hoſte) canſt thou preche?
Come nere and tel ſome holy thing.
Sir, quod he, I herd onis teche
A preeſt in pulpit gode preching.
Saie on quod he, I the beſeche.
Sir, I am redy at your bidding.
I praie that no man me reproche
While that I am my Tale telling.

Thus endeth the Prologue.

HERE FOLOWETH

THE FIRST PART OF THE TALE*.

A full ſterne ſtrief is ſtirrid newe,
Emmany ſtedis in a ſtounde,
Of ſondry ſedis that ben ſewe;
It ſemith that ſome ben unſounde,
For ſome be grete growin on grounde,
Some ben ſouble, ſimple and ſmall:
Whether of 'hem is falſir founde
The falſir ſoule mote him bifall.
That one ſide is that I of tell
Popis, cardinals, and prelates,
Parſons, monkis, and freris fell,
Priours, abbotes, of grete eſtates;
Of heven and hell thei kepe the yeates,
And Peter's ſucceſſours ben all,
And this is demid by old dates;
But falſhed ſoule mote it befall.
The othir ſide ben pore and pale,
And peple yput out of preſe,
And ſemin caitiffes ſore a cale,
And er in one without encreſe
Iclepid Lollers and Londleſe;
Who totheth on 'hem thei ben untall;
Thei ben arayid all for pece,
But falſhed ſoule mote it befall
Many a countrey have I ſought
To knowe the falſir of theſe two,
But aye my travaile was for nought
All ſo ferre as I have ygo,
But as I wandrid in a wro,
Within a wode beſide a wall,
Two foulis ſawe I ſitting tho,
The falſir ſoule mote him befall.
That one did plete on the Pope's ſide,
A Griffon of a grimme ſtature;
A Pellicane withoutin pride
To theſe Lollers ylaied his lure;
He muſed his mattir in meſure
To counſaile, Chriſt ay gan he call;
The Griffon ſhewed as ſharpe as fire,
But falſhed ſoule mote it befall.

The Pellicane began to preche
Bothe of mercie and of mekeneſſe,
And ſaied that Chriſt ſo gan us teche,
And meke and merciable gan bleſſe:
The' Evangely berith witneſſe
A lambe he likeneth Chriſt ovre' all,
In tokening that he mekiſt was
Sith pride was out of hevin fall.
And ſo ſhould every Criſtened be,
Prieſtis and Peter's ſucceſſours,
Beth lowliche and of lowe degre,
And uſin none yerthly honours,
Ne croune ne curious covertours,
Ne pilloure ne other proude pall,
Ne to cofrin up grete treſours,
For falſhed ſoule mote it befall.
Prieſtis ſhould for no cattill plede,
But chaſten 'hem in charite,
Ne to no battaile ſhould men lede
For inhaunſing ther owne degre,
Nat willin ſittinges in hie ſe,
No ſoverainte in hous ne hall,
Worldly worſhip deſie and fle;
Who willeth highnes foule ſhall fall.
Alas! who maie ſoche ſainctis call
That wilnith welde yerthly honour?
Lowe as Lucifere ſoche ſhall fall,
In baleſull blackneſſe build ther boure
That eggith peple to erroure,
And makith them unto 'hem thrall;
To Criſt I holde ſoche one traitour;
Lowe as Luciſer ſoche ſhall fall,
That willith to be kingis peres,
And higher than the Emperour,
And ſome that werin but pore freres
Now wollin waxe a warriour;
God ne is not ther governour
That holdith none his permagall,
While cove'tiſe is ther conſailour;
All ſoche falſhede mote nedis fall,
That hie on horſe willith to ride
In glitterande golde of grete araie,
Painted and portrid alle in pride,
No common knight maie go ſo gaie,

* A complaint againſt the pride and covetouſneſs of the clergy, made no doubt by Chaucer, ſays the editor of Chaucer's Works printed for *Ad. Iſlip* at *London*, *A. D.* 1602. *Urry*.

Chaunge of clothing every daie,
With goldin girdils grete and ſmall,
As boiſtous as is bere at baie;
All ſoche falſhede mote nedis fall.
With pride puniſhith thei the pore,
And ſome one thei ſuſtain with ſale,
Of holie churche makith an hore,
And fill ther wombe with wine and ale;
With money fille thei many a male,
And chaffrin churchis when thei fall,
And telle the peple a leude tale;
Soche falſe faitours foule 'hem befall.
Thei ſede of many manir metes,
With ſong and ſolas ſitting long,
And filleth ther wombe, and faſte fretes,
And from the mete unto the gong,
And aftir mete with harpe and ſong,
And eche man mote 'hem Lordis call,
And hote ſpicis evir emong;
Soche falſe faitours foule 'hem befall.
Miters thei werin mo than two
Iperlid as the quen'is hedde,
A ſtaffe of golde, and pirrie lo!
As hevie as' it were made of ledde;
With clothe of gold bothe new and redde,
With glitterande gold as grene as gall,
By dome thei dampne men to be dedde;
All ſoche faitours foule 'hem befall.
And Criſt'is peple proudly curſe
With brode boke and braying bell,
And to put pennies in ther purſe
Thei woll ſell bothe hevin and hell:
In ther ſentence and thou wilt dwell
Thei willin geſſe in ther gaie hall,
And though the ſoth thou of 'hem tell
In the grete curſing ſhalt thou fall.
That is ybleſſid that thei bleſſe,
And curſid that thei curſin woll,
And thus the peple thei oppreſſe,
And have ther lordſhippis at full:
And many be merchauntes of woll,
And to purs pennies woll come thrall,
The pore peple thei al to pull;
Such falſe faitours foule 'hem befall,
Lordis alſo mote to 'hem loute,
Obeyſaunt to ther brode bleſſing,
Thei ridin with ther royal route
On a courſir as' it were a king,
With ſadle of golde glittering,
With curious harneis quaintly crallit,
Stiroppis gaie of golde maſtling;
All ſuche falſhed foule may befal it.
Chriſtes Miniſters clepid thei bene,
And rulin al in robberie,
But Antichriſte thei ſervin clene,
Attirid al in tirannie,
Witneſſe of John his prophecie;
Antichriſte is ther admirall,
Tiffelers attired in trecherie;
Al ſuche faitours foule 'hem befall.
Who ſaith that ſome of 'hem may ſinne
He ſhal be domid to be ded;
Some of 'hem wollin gladly winne
Al ayenſt that which God forbed.

Al Holieſt they clepe ther hed,
That of ther rule is full regall;
Alas that evir thei ete bred!
For al ſuch falſhed wol foule fall.
Ther hed covitith al honour,
To be worſhipped in worde and dede,
Kingis mote to him knele and coure,
To the' apoſtles that Chriſt forbede:
To Popis heſte ſuch take more hede
Than to kepe Chriſtes commaundement,
Of gold and ſilvir ben ther wede,
Thei holde him hole omnipotent.
He ordaineth by his ordinaunce
To pariſhe prieſtis a powere,
To' anothir a gretir avaunce,
A gretir point to his miſtere;
But for he' is highiſt in erth here
To him reſerveth he many' a point,
But unto Chriſt, that hath no pere,
Reſervith he no pin no joynt.
So ſemith he abovin all,
And Chriſt abovin him nothinge,
Whan that he ſittith in his ſtall
Dampnith and ſavith as him thinke;
Suche pride tofore hie God doth ſtinke:
An angel bad John to' him not knele,
Only to God to do his bowinge;
Soche worſhip-willers mote ill ſele.
Thei ne clepe Chriſt but *Sanctus Deus*,
And clepe ther hed *Sanctiſſimus*;
All they that ſuche a ſecte ſewis
I trowe thei taken 'hem amiſſe:
In erth here they havin ther bliſſe,
Ther hie maſtir is Beliall;
Chriſt his pore peple from 'hem wiſſe,
For al ſuche falſe will foule befall.
They mowin both ybinde and loſe,
And all is for ther holy life;
To ſave or dampne they mowen choſe;
Betwene 'hem now is a grete ſtrife;
Many' a man is killed with a knife
To wete whieh havin lordſhip ſhall;
For ſuche Chriſt ſuffrid woundis five,
For all ſuche falſhed will foule fall.
Chriſt ſaid, *Qui gladio percutit*,
With ſwerde ſurely he ſhall die;
He bad his prieſtis pece and grith,
And bad 'hem not drede for to die,
And bad them be both ſimple' and ſlie,
And carke not for no cattell,
And truſte on God that ſittith on hie,
For al falſe ſhal full foule befall.
Theſe wollin make men to ſwere
Ayenſt Chriſt'is commaundiment,
And Chriſt'is members al to tere,
On rode as he were new yrent;
Suche lawes thei maken by aſſent,
Eche on it trowith as a ball,
And thus the pore be fully ſhent,
But falſhed foule it ſhulle befall.
Ne uſin thei no ſimonie,
But ſelle churchis and priories,
Ne they uſin to none envie,
But curſin al 'hem contraries,

And hirith men by daies and yeres
With ſtrength to hold 'hem in ther ſtall,
And culle all ther advarſaries,
Therfore falſhed foule thou them fall.
With purſe they purchaſe perſonage,
With purſe thei payin 'hem to plede,
And men of warre thei wollin wage
To bring ther enemies to dede,
And lordis livis they wol lede,
And muchil take, and give but ſmall,
But he' it ſo get from it ſhal ſhede,
And make ſuche falſe right foule yfall.
They halowe nothing but for hire,
Ne churche, ne font, ne veſtiment,
And make orders in every ſhire,
But prieſtis pay for the parchment;
Of riatours they taken rent,
Therwith they ſmere the ſhep'is ſkall,
For many churches ben ſuſpent;
All ſuche falſhed foule it befall.
Some livith not in lecherie,
But haunte wenchis, widows, and wives,
And puniſh the pore for putre,
Themſelſe it uſeth al ther lives;
And but a man to them him ſhrives
To hevin come he nevir ſhall,
He ſhal be curſed as be catives;
To hel thei ſaine that he ſhal fall.
Ther was more mercy' in Maximine,
And Nero, that never was gode,
Than there is now in ſome of them
Whan he hath on his furrid hode;
They folowe Chriſt that ſhede his blode
To heven, as bucket to the wall;
Suche wrechis yben worſe than wode,
And al ſuche faitours foule them fall.
They give ther almis to the riche
To mainteynours and men of lawe,
For to lordis they wol be liche,
And harlots ſonne not worthe an hawe;
Sothfaſtneſſe alle ſuche han ſlawe;
They kembe ther crokettes with criſtall,
And dredé of God they have doune drawe;
Al ſuche faitours foule 'hem befall.
They make parſons for the pennie,
And canons and their cardinals;
Unnethe amongſt 'hem al is any
That ne hath gloſed the goſpel fals,
For Chriſt made ner no cathedrals,
Ne with him was no cardinall
With a redde hatte, as uſe minſtrals;
But falſhed foule mote it befall.
Ther tithing and ther offring bothe
They clemith by poſſeſſion,
Ne therof n'il they none forgo,
But robbin men as a raunſome:
The tithing of *turpe lucrum*
With theſe maiſters is veniall;
Tithinge of bribry and larſon
Will make falſhed full foule to fall.
They takin to ferme ther ſompnours
To harme the peple what they may,
To pardoners and falſe faitours
Thei ſell ther ſeles I dare well ſay,
And all to holdin gret arraie,
To multiplie 'hem more metall,
They drede ful litel dom'is day,
Whan al ſuche falſhed ſhal foule fall.
Suche harlottes ſhul men diſclaunder,
For that they ſhullin make them gre,
And ben as proud as Alexander,
And fain to the pore Wo be ye!
By yere eche prieſt ſhal paie his ſe
For to encreſe his lemmans call;
Suche herdis ſhul wel ivil the,
And al ſuche falſe ſhal foule befall.
And if a man be falſely famed,
And wol ymake purgacioun,
Than wol the' officers be agramed,
And aſſign him fro toun to toun;
So nede he muſt payin raunſome,
Though he be clene as is chriſtall,
And than have an abſolution;
But al ſuche falſe ſhal foule befall.
Though he be giltie of the dede,
And that he may the money paie,
Al the while his purſe wol yblede
He may uſe it fro day to day.
The biſhopes officers gone gay,
And this game they uſe ovir all,
The pore to pil is al their pray;
But al ſuche falſe ſhul foule befall.
Alas! God ordained no ſuche lawe,
Ne no ſuch craafte of covetiſe,
But he forbad it by his lawe;
Suche rulers mowen of God agriſe,
For al his rulis ben rightwiſe:
Theſe newe pointis ben pure papall,
And Godd'is lawe they all diſpice,
And al ſuche faitours ſhul foule fall.
They ſaine that Peter had the key
Of heven and hel, to have and holde;
I trowe Peter toke no money
For no ſinnis that he yſolde:
Suche ſucceſſours yben to bolde,
In winning all ther witte they wral,
Ther conſcience is waxin colde,
And al ſuch faitours foul 'hem fall.
Peter was ner ſo grete a fole
To leve his key with ſuche a lorell,
Or take ſuche curſid ſoc or tole,
He was advifid nothing well;
I trowe they have the key of hell,
Their maiſtir is of that marſhall,
For there thei dreſſin 'hem to dwell,
And with falſe Lucifer to fall.
Thei ben as proude as Luciſarre,
As angry and as envious;
From a gode faith they ben ful farre;
In cove'tiſe they ben curious;
To catche catil as covitous
As hounde that for hungre wol yall,
Ungodly and ungracious;
And nedely ſuche falſe ſhal foule fall.
The Pope, and he were Peter's heire,
Me thinke he errith in this caſe,
Whan choiſe of biſhop's in diſpaire
To choſin 'hem in divers place,

A lorde ſhal write to him for grace,
For his clerke anone praye he ſhall,
So ſhal he ſpedin his purchaſe;
And al ſuche falſe foule 'hem befall.
Although he can ne manir gode
A lord'is prayir ſhal be ſpedde,
Though he be wilde of wil or wode,
Nat underſtanding what men redde,
A leude boſtir, that God forbedde,
As gode a biſhoppe' is my horſe Ball;
Suche a Pope is full foule beſtede,
And at the laſte wol foule yfall.
He makith prieſtes for erthly thanke,
And not at all for Chriſt'is ſake;
Suche that yben ful fat and ranke,
To ſoul'is hele none hede they take;
Al is wel done what er they make,
For they ſhal anſwere ones for all;
For world'is thank ſuch worch and wake,
And al ſuche falſe ſhal foule befall.
Suche that can nat yſay ther crede
With prayir ſhul be made prelates,
Nothir can thei the goſpell rede,
Suche ſhul now weldin hie eſtates;
The hiè godes frendſhip 'hem makes,
Thei totith on ther ſumme totall;
Suche bere the keyes of hell'is yates,
And all ſuche falſe ſhal foule befall.
Thei forſakin for Chriſt'is love
Travaile, and hungre, thurſte, and colde;
They ben ordrid or al above
Out of youthed til they ben olde;
By the' dore they go nat to the folde,
To helpe ther ſhepe they nought traval,
For hirid men al ſuche I holde,
And al ſuche falſe foule 'hem befall.
For Chriſt our King thei wol forſake,
And knowe him nought for his poverte,
For Chriſt'is love they wol awake,
And drinke piement al aperte:
Of God they ſeme nothing aferde,
As luſty live as Lamual,
And drive ther ſhepe into deſert;
Al ſuche falſe faitours ſhul foule fal.
Chriſt yhad twelve apoſtles here,
Nowe ſay they Ther may be but one
That may not erre in no manere,
Who leve not this ben loſt echone:
Peter errid, ſo did not John;
Why is he cleped the Principall?
Chriſte cleped him Peter, not the Stone;
Al falſe faitours foule 'hem befal.
Why curſin they the croiſery
Chriſt'is Chriſtian creturis?
For bytwene them is now envy
To be enhaunſid in honours;
Chriſtin livers with ther labours,
For they levin on no mortal,
Ben do to deth with diſhonours,
And al ſuche falſe foule 'hem befal.
What knoweth a tilloure at the plowe
The Pop'is name, and what he hate?
His crede ſuffiſeth to' him inowe,
And knoweth a cardi'nal by his hatte.
Rough is the pore unrightly latte,
That knowith Chriſt his God royal;
Suche maters be not worth a gnatte,
But ſuche falſe faitours foule 'hem fal.
A king ſhal knele and kiſſe his ſhowe,
Chriſt let a ſinful kiſſe his fete,
Me thinke he holdeth him hie inowe,
So Lucifer did, that hie ſet:
Suche one me thinke himſelfe foryet,
Or to the trouth he was nat cal:
Chriſte that ſuffirid woundis wete,
Shall make all ſuche falſhed foule fall.
They layith out ther larg nettes
For to takin ſilvir and golde,
Thei fillin coffers, and ſackes fettes
Thei as they ſoulis catchin ſholde;
Ther ſervauntes be to them unholde,
But they can doublin ther rentall;
To bigge 'hem caſtles bigge 'hem holde;
And al ſuche falſe foule 'hem befall.

Here endeth the firſt parte of this Tale, and hereafter foloweth the ſeconde parte.

To accorde what this word' fall
No more Engliſhe ne can I finde,
Shewing anothir nowe I ſhall,
For I have moche to ſaye behinde,
How prieſtis han the peple pinde,
As curteis Chriſte yhath me kinde,
And put this matter in my minde,
To make this manir men amende.
Shortely to ſhende 'hem, and ſhewe nowe
How wrongfully they werche and walke,
Of hie God nothing tell, ne howe,
But in Goddes worde tell many a balke,
In harnis holde 'hem and in halke,
And prechen' of tithis and offrende,
And untruely of the goſpel talke;
For his mercy God it amende!
What els is Antichriſte to ſaie
But even Chriſt'is adverſarie?
Suche hath now ben many a daie
To Chriſt'is bidding ful contrarie,
That from the trouthè clene ywarry;
Out of the way they ben ywende,
And Chriſt'is peple untruely cary;
God for his pitie it amende!
They live contrary to Chriſtes life,
In hie pride againſt mekeneſſe,
Againſt ſuffraunce they uſin ſtrife,
And angre ayenſt ſobreneſſe,
Ayeniſt wiſedom wilfulneſſe;
To Chriſt'is talis litil tende,
Againſt meſure outrigiouſneſſe;
But whan God wol it may amende.
Lordely life ayenſt lowlineſſe,
And demin al without mercy,
And covetiſe ayenſte largeſſe,
Ayeniſt trouthè trechery,

And ayenist almesse envy;
Ayenist Christ they comprehende;
For chastite mainteine leche'ry;
God for his grace this amende!
Against penaunce thei use delightes,
Ayenst suffraunce strong defence,
Ayenst God they usin ill rightes,
Ayenist pitie punishmentes,
Open' evil ayenst continence;
Ther wickid winning worse dispende,
Sobirnesse sette in to dispence;
God for his godenesse it amende!
Why cleimin they holy' his powere,
And wranglin ayenst al his hestes?
His living folowe thei nought here,
But livin worse than witlesse bestes;
Of fisshe and flesshe they lovin festes;
As lordis thei ben brode ikende;
Of Godd'is pore thei hatin gestes;
God for his mercy this amende!
With Dives suche shal have ther dome,
That saine that they be Christ'is frendes,
And do nothing as they should done,
Al suche ben falsir than ben fendes:
On the peple they ley suche bendes
As God in erth they han offende;
Succour for such Christe now send us,
And for his mercy this amende!
A token' of Antichrist they be;
His careckes ben now wide iknowe,
Receved to preche shal no man be
Without tokin of him I trowe:
Eche Christin priest to prechin owe,
From God above thei ben ysende
Godds word to al folke for to showe,
And sinful man for to amende.
Christ sent the pore for to preche,
The royal riche he did not so,
Now dare no pore the peple teche,
For Antichrist is al ther foe;
Among the peple he mote go,
He hath biddin al suche suspende,
Some hath he hent, and thinketh yet mo;
But al this God may wel amende.
Al tho that han the worlde forsake,
And livin lowly, as God badde,
Into ther prison shulle be take,
Betin and boundin, and forth ladde:
Hereof I rede no man be dradde,
Christ said that his should be yshende;
Eche man ought hereof to be gladde,
For God ful wel it wol amende.
They take on 'hem royall power,
And say they havin swerdis two,
One curse to hel, one se men here:
At his taking Christ had no mo,
Yet Peter had but one of tho,
And Christ to him smite gan defende,
And into the' sheth badde put it tho;
And al suche mischeves God amende!
Christ bad Peter to kepe his shepe,
And with his sworde forbade 'hem smite;
Swerde is no tole with shepe to kepe,
But to shepherdes that shepe wol bite;
Me thinke suche shepherdes ben to wite
Who' ayen ther shepe with swerde contende;
They drive ther shepe with grete despite;
But al this God may well amende.
Peter's succession be thei nought
Whom Christ ymade his chefe pastoure;
A swerde no shepherde usin ought
But he would se as a bochoure:
Who so were Peter's succession
Should bere his shepe til his backe bende,
And shadowe 'hem from every shoure;
And al this God may wel amende.
Succession to Peter ben these
In that, that Peter Christe forsoke,
That levir had God's love to lese
Than shepherde had to lese his hoke;
He culleth the shepe as doth the coke
Of 'em takin they woll untrende,
And falsely glose the Gospell boke;
God for his mercy them amende!
Whan Christ had take Peter the kay
Christ saide he must ydie for man;
That Peter to Christ gan withsay,
Christe bad him Go behinde, Sathan:
Suche counsailours many' of these han,
For world'is wele God to offende;
Peter's succession they ben than
But al suche God may wel amende.
For Sathan is to say no more
But he that contrary to Christ is,
In this they lernin Peter's lore,
They sewin him whan he did misse;
They folowe him forsoth in this
That Christ would Peter reprehende,
But nat that longith to' hevin blisse;
God for his mercie 'hem amende!
Thei none apostle sewen, in case
Of ought that I can understonde,
But him that betraieth Christ, Judas,
That bare the purse in every londe,
And al that he might fette on honde
He hidde and stale, and it mispende:
His rule these traitours han in honde;
Almighty God all suche amende!
And at the last his lorde gan tray
Cursidly through false covetise,
So would these traine him for money
And they ywistin in what wise;
They be sikre' of the sele ensise.
From all sothnesse they ben yfrende,
And covetise chaunge with quentise;
Almighty God al suche amende!
Were Christ upon erth, here este sone,
These wouldin dampne him to die;
All his hestis they han fordone,
And saine his sawes ben heresie;
Ayenst his commaundementes they crie,
And dampnin all his to be brende,
For thei ne like suche losengrie;
God Almighty all suche amende!
These han more might in Englande here
Than hath the king and all his lawe,
They han purchasid suche powere
To takin 'hem whom list not knawe,

And ſay that hereſie' is ther ſawe,
And ſo to priſon wol 'hem ſende;
It was not ſo by eldir dawe;
God for his mercy it amende!
The king'is lawe wol no man deme
Angerliche withoutin anſwere,
But if any man theſe miſqueme
He ſhall be baightid as a bere,
And yet wel worſe they wol him tere,
And in priſon wollin him pende
In ginis, and in othir gere;
Whan that God woll it may amende.
The king ne taxith nat his men
But by aſſent of the commi'nalte,
But theſe eche yere wol raunſom 'hem
Maiſtirfully, more than dothe he:
Ther ſelis by yere bettir be
Than is the king'is in extende,
Ther officers han gretir ſe;
But alle this miſchefe God amende!
Who ſo wol prove a teſtament
That is nat al worth tennè pounde,
He ſhal paye for the parchèment
The thirde of the money all rounde;
Thus the pore peple is ranſounde,
They ſay ſuche parte t'em ſhould apende,
There as they gripen' it goeth to grounde;
God for his mercy it amende!
A ſimple fornication
Twenty ſhillingis he ſhall pay,
And than have abſolucion
And al the yere uſe it he may:
Thus thei lettin 'hem go aſtray;
Thei recke nat though the ſoule be brende;
Theſe kepin evill Peter's kay;
And al ſuche ſhepherdes God amende!
Wondir is that the parliamente,
And all the lordis of this londe,
Here to takin ſo lite entente
To helpe the peple' out of ther honde,
For thei ben hardir in ther bonde,
Worſe bete, and cruellir ybrende,
Than to the king is underſtand;
God him helpe this for to amende!
What biſhoppes, what religions,
Han in this lande as muche lay ſe,
Lordeſhippis and poſſeſſions,
More than lordis it ſemith me;
That makith 'hem leſe charite:
They mowin not to God attende,
In erth thei have ſo highe degre;
God for his mercy it amende!
The Empe'rour yaſe the Pope ſomtime
So highè lordeſhip him about,
That at the laſt the ſely kime
The proudè Pope yput him out,
So of this relme is in grete dout;
But, Lordes, beware, and them defende,
For nowe theſe folke be wondir ſtoute;
The king and lords now this amende.

Thus endith the ſeconde parte of this Tale, and hereafter ſoloweth the thirde.

Moyses lawe forbode it tho
That preſtis ſhould no lordſhippes welde,
Chriſt'is goſpell biddith alſo
That they ſhould no lordſhippis helde;
Chriſtes apoſtels were ner ſo bolde,
No ſuche lordſhippes to 'hem embrace,
But ſklere ther ſhepe and kepe ther folde;
May God amende 'hem for his grace!
For thei ne ben but counterfete,
Men may yknow 'hem by ther fruite,
Ther greteneſſe maketh 'hem God foryete,
And take his mekeneſſe in deſpite;
And thei were pore and had but lite
Thei n'old nat demen' aftir the face,
Noriſhe ther ſhepe, and 'hem nat bite;
May God amende 'hem for his grace!

Griffon.

What canſt thou preche ayenſt chanons
That men yclepin Seculere?

Pellican.

Thei ben curates of many tounes,
On yerth they havin grete powere,
They have grete prebendis and dere,
Some two or thre, and ſome have mo,
A parſonage to ben playing fere,
And yet thei ſerve the king alſo,
And let to-ferme all that fare
To whom that wol moſte give therfore,
Some wollin ſpende, and ſome woll ſpare,
And ſome wol laye it up in ſtore;
A cure of ſoule they care not fore,
So that they mowin money take;
Whethir ther ſoules be wonne or lore
Ther profites they woll not forſake.
They have a gedering procuratour,
That can the pore peple enplede,
And roble 'hem as a ravinour,
And to his lorde the mony lede,
And catche of quicke and eke of dede,
And richin him and his lorde eke,
And to robbe the pore give gode rede
Of olde and yonge, of hole and ſicke.
Therwith they purchaſe 'hem lay ſe
In londe, there as 'hem likith beſt,
And buildin brode as a cite
Both in the eſt and in the weſt;
To purchaſe thus they ben ful preſt,
But on the pore they woll nought ſpende,
Ne no gode give to Godd'is geſt,
Ne ſende him ſome that all hath ſende.
By ther ſervice ſoche wollin live,
And truſt that othir to treſure;
Though all ther pariſhe die unſhrive
Thei woll nat givin a roſe floure;
Ther life ſhould be as a mirrour
Both to lerid and leude alſo,
And teche the folke ther lele labour;
Soche maiſter men ben all miſgo.
Some of 'hem yben full harde nigges,
And ſome of 'hem ben proude and gaie,
Some ſpendin ther gode upon gigges,
And findin 'hem of grete araie.

Alas! what thinke theſe men to ſaie
That thus diſpendin Godd'is gode?
At the grete dredefull dom'is daie
Soche wretchis ſhall be worſe than wode.
Some ther churchis nevir ne ſe,
Ne ner o penie thidir ſende;
Though that the pore for hungir die,
O penie' on 'hem will thei not ſpende:
Have thei receiving of the rente
Thei recke nef of the remènaunt;
Alas! the devill hath clene 'hem blente;
Soche one is Sathanes ſojournaunt.
And uſe horedome and harlottrie,
And covetiſe, and pompe, and pride,
And ſlothè, and wrathe, and eke envie,
And ſewin ſinne by every ſide;
Alas! where thinkin ſoche t' abide?
How woll thei ther accomptis yeld?
From hie God thei mowe 'hem not hide;
Soche willers witte' is not worth a nelde.
Thei ben ſo rotid in richeſſe
That Chriſt'is povert is foryet;
Yſervid with ſo many meſſe
Hem thinke that manna is no mete:
All is gode that thei mowin gete;
Thei wene to livin evirmore;
But whan that God at dome is ſtè
Soche treſour is a feble ſtore.
Unnethis mote thei matins ſaie
For counting and for courtholding,
And yet he jangilith as jaie,
And underſtont himſelf nothing;
He woll yſerve bothe erle and king
For his finding and for his fe,
And hide his tithing and offring;
This is a feblè charitè.
Othir thei ben proude or covè'tous;
Or elles thei ben hard or hungrie,
Or thei ben libe'rall or lecherous,
Or els medlers with marchandrie,
Mainteiners of men with maiſtrie,
Or ſtewardes, countours, or pledours,
And ſerve God in ypocriſie;
Soche prieſtis ben Chriſtes falſe traitours.
Thei ben falſe, thei ben vengeable,
And begile men in Chriſt'is name;
Thei ben unſtedfaſt and unſtable;
To traie ther Lorde 'hem thinke no ſhame;
To ſervin God thei ben full lame;
Godd'is thevis, and falſely ſtele,
And falſely Godd'is worde defame;
In winning is ther world'is wele.
Antichriſt theſe prieſtis ſerve all,
I praie the who maie ſayin Naie?
With Antichriſt ſoche ſhullin fall,
Thei folowen him in dede and ſaie;
Thei ſervin him in riche araie,
To ſervin Chriſt ſoche falſely fain;
Why at the dredfull dom'is daie
Shull thei not folowe him to pain?
That knowen 'hem ſelf that thei doen ill
Ayenſt Chriſt'is commaund ment,
And amende 'hem ner ne will,
But ſerve Sathan by one aſſent.

Who ſayith ſothe he ſhall be ſhent,
Or ſpeketh ayenſt ther falſe living,
Who ſo well livith ſhall be brent,
For ſoche ben gretir than the king.
Popis, biſhops, and cardinals,
Chanons, and parſons, and vicare,
In Goddes ſervice I trowe ben fals
That ſacramentis ſellin here,
And ben as proude as Lucifere:
Eche man loke whethir that I lie;
Who ſo ſpekith ayenſt ther powere
It ſhall be holdin hereſie.
Lokith how many orders take
Onely of Chriſt for his ſervice,
That the world'is godis forſake;
Who ſo take ordirs othir wiſe
I trowe that thei ſhall ſore agriſe,
For all the gloſè that thei conne,
All ne ſewin not this affiſe;
In evill time thei thus begonne.
Loke how many emong hem all
Ne holdin not this hiè waie
With Antichriſt thei ſhullin fall,
For that thei wollin God betraie:
God amende 'hem, that beſt ymaie!
For many men thei makin ſhende;
Thei wetin well the ſothe I ſaie,
But the devill hath foule 'hem blende.
Som of 'hem on ther churchis dwell
Apparailled porely; proude of porte;
The ſeven ſacramentes thei doen ſell;
In cattell catching' is ther comfort:
Of eche mattir thei wollin mell;
To doen 'hem wrong is ther diſport;
To afraie the peple thei ben fell,
And hold 'hem lower than doeth the lorde.
And for the tithing of a ducke,
Or of an applè or an aie,
Thei make men ſwere upon a boke;
Lo! thus thei foulin Chriſt'is ſaie:
Soche berin evill hevin kaie;
Thei mowin aſſoile, thei mowe ſhrive,
With mennis wivis ſtrongly plaie,
And with true tillers, ſturte and ſtrive,
At the wreſtling and at the wake,
And the chief chauntours at the nale,
Market beters, and medling make,
Hoppen' and houtin with heve and hale;
At faire freſhe, and at winè ſtale,
Thei dine and drinke, and make debate,
The ſeven ſacramentes ſet a ſaile;
Kepe ſoche the kaies of hevin gate?
Mennis wivis thei wollin hold,
And though that thei ben right ſory,
To ſpeke thei ſhull not be ſo bold,
For ſompning to' the conſiſtory,
And make 'hem ſaie with mouthe I lie;
Though thei it ſawin with ther eye
His lemman holdin opinly
No man ſo harde to aſke why.
He woll have tithing and offring
Maugre whoſoevir it grutche,
And twiſe on the daie he wo'ſhing!
Godd'is prieſtis ne were none ſoche;

With your gloſe and your hereſie,
For ye can live no bettir life
But clene in fals hypocriſie,
And bringiſt the in wo and ſtriſe.
And therwith have ye not doen,
For ye ne havin here ne cure;
Ye ſerve the devill, not God ne man,
And he ſhall payin you your hire;
For ye wol farin wel at feſtes,
And be warm clothid for the cold,
Therfore ye gloſin Godd'is heſtes,
And begile peple yong and old.
And all the ſevin ſacramentes
Ye ſpeke ayenſt as ye were ſlie,
Tithings, offringes, with your ententes,
And on your Lord'is body lie:
All this ye doen to live in eſe,
As who ſayith ther ben none ſoche,
And ſain The Pope' is not worth a peſe,
To make the peple' ayen him groche.
And this ycommith in by ſendes
To bring the Chriſtin in diſtaunce,
For thei would that no man were frendes.
Levith thy chattring with miſchaunce!
If thou live well what wilt thou more?
Let othir men live as 'hem liſt,
Spendin ther gode or kepe in ſtore;
Othir mennes conſcience ner thou n'iſt.
Ye han no cure to anſwere fore;
What meddle' ye that han hot to doen?
Let men live as thei han doen yore,
For thou ſhalt anſwere for no man.
The Pellican ſayid, Sir, naie,
I ne diſpiſid not the Pope
Ne no ſacrament, ſothe to ſaie,
But ſpeke in charite' and gode hope:
But I diſpiſe ther hiè pride,
Ther welthe that ſhould be pore in ſprite;
Ther wickidneſſe is knowe ſo wide,
Thei ſervin God in falſe habite,
And tournin mekeneſſe into pride,
And lowlineſſe into' hie degre,
And Godd'is wordis tourne and hide,
And I am moved by charite
To letthn men to livin ſo
With all my conning and my might,
And to warnin men of ther wo,
And to tellin 'hem trouth and right.
The ſacramentes be ſoul'is hele
If thei ben uſid in gode uſe;
Ayenſt that ſpeke I ner a delo,
For than ne were I nothing wiſe;
But thei that uſe 'hem in miſſe manere,
Or ſet 'hem up to any ſale,
I trowe thei ſhall abie 'hem dere;
This is my reſon, this my tale:
Who ſo taketh hem unrightfulliche
Ayenſt the ten commandèmentes,
Or elles by gloſe wrechidliche
Selleth any of the ſacramantes,
I trowe thei doe the devill homage,
In that thei wetin thei doe wrong,
And therto I dare well to wage
Thei ſerve Sathan for all their ſong.
To tithen' and offre' is holſome life,
So it be doen in due manere,
A man to houſelin and to ſhrive,
Wedding, and all othir in fere.
So it be nother ſolde ne bought,
Ne takè ne give for covetiſe,
And it be ſo taken' it is nought;
Who ſelleth him ſo maie fore agriſe:
On our Lordes body' I doe not lie,
I ſaie the ſothe thorough true rede,
His fleſhe and blode, through his miſterie,
Is there all in the forme of brede.
How it is there it nedeth not ſtrive,
Whethre' it be ſubget or accident,
But as Chriſt was whan he' was on live
So is he there in verament.
If Pope or cardi'nall live gode live,
As Chriſt us bad in his goſpell,
Ayenſt that ne woll I not ſtrive,
But me thinkith thei live not well;
For if the Pope lived as God bedde,
Pride and highneſſe he ſhould diſpiſe,
Richeſſe, covetiſe, and croune on hedde;
Mekeneſſe and poverte' he ſhould uſe.
The Griffon ſaied he ſhould abaie,
Thou ſhalt be brent in balefull fire,
And all thy ſect I ſhall diſtrie;
Ye ſhall be hangid by the ſwire.
Ye ſhulle be hangid and to drawe:
Who givith you leve for to preche,
Or ſpekin ayenſt Godd'is lawe,
And the peple thus falſely teche?
Thou ſhalt be curſed with boke and bell,
And diſſevered from holie churche,
And clene idampnid into hell,
Othirwiſe but ye wollin worche.
The Pelli'can ſaied, That I ne drede;
Your curſing is of lite value;
Of God I hope to have my mede,
For it is falſhed that ye ſhewe,
For ye ben out of charite,
And wilne vengeaunce, as did Nero:
To ſuffrin I wol redy be;
I drede not all that thou canſt do.
Chriſt bad ones ſuffre for his love,
And ſo he taught all his ſervauntes,
But thou' amende for his ſake above;
I drede not all thy maintenaunce;
For if I drede the world'is hate,
Me thinkith I were lite to praiſe:
I drede nothing your hie eſtate,
Ne I ne drede not your diſeſe.
Wollin ye tourne and leve your pride,
And your hie porte and your richeſſe,
Your curſing ſhould not go ſo wide;
God bring you into right wiſeneſſe!
For I drede not your tirannie,
For nothing that ye can ydoen;
To ſuffre I am all redie,
Sikir I recke nevir how ſone.
The Griffon grinned as he were wode,
And lokid lovely as an owle,
And ſwore by cock'is herte and blode
He wold him tere every doule;

Holy churche thou diſclaundriſt foule;
For thy ſpeche I woll the to race,
And make thy fleſh to rote and moule;
Loſell, thou ſhalt have hardè grace.
The Griffon flewe forth on his waie,
The Pellican did ſit and wepe,
And to himſelf he gan to ſaie,
God would that any of Chriſtes ſhepe
Had herdin, and itaken kepe
Eche a word that here ſayid was,
And would it write and well ikepe;
God would it were all for his grace!

Plowman.

I anſwerid, and ſaied I would,
If for my travaile one would pey.

Pellican.

He ſaied yes; theſe ther God han ſold,
For thei han grete ſtore of money.

Plowman.

I ſayid, Tell me and thou maie,
Why telliſt thou menn'is treſpace?

Pellican.

He ſaid, To' amende hem in gode ſay,
If God woll give me any grace;
For Chriſt himſelf is liken to me,
That for his peple died on rode;
As fare I right ſo farith he,
He fedith his birdes with his blode:
But theſe doen evill ayenſt Gode,
And ben his foen undir frendes face;
I told 'hem how ther living ſtode,
And God amende 'hem for his grace!

Plowman.

What ailith the Griffon, tell why
That he holdith on the' othir ſide,
For thei two yben likily
And with kindis yrobin wide.

Pellican.

The foulè betokinith pride,
As Lucifer that high flewe was,
And ſith he did him in ill hide,
For he agilted Godd'is grace.
As birde flyith up in the aire,
And livith by birdes that ben meke,
So theſe ben flowe up in diſpaire,
And ſhendin ſely ſoulis eke;
The foulis that ben in ſinnes eke
He culleth 'hem; knele therfore, alas!
For bribrie Godd'is forbode breke;
But God amende it for his grace!
The hinder parte is a loun,
A robber and a raviner,
That robbeth the peple in yerth doune,
And in yerth holdith none his pere:
So fareth this foule both ferre and nere,
With tempo'rel ſtrength the peple chaſe.
As a lion proude in yerth here;
May God amende 'hem for his grace!

Pellican.

He flewe forth with his wingis twain
All drouping and daſid, and dull,
But ſone the Griffon came again,
Of his foulis the yerth was full;
The Pelli'can he had caſt to pull,
So grete nombre ner ſene ther was,
What manir of foules telle I woll,
If God wol give me of his grace.
With the Griffon come foulis fele,
Ravins, rokis, crowis, and pie,
And graie foulis, agadrid wele,
Igurde above they wouldin hie,
Gledis and boſardes weren 'hem by,
White molles and puttockes toke ther place,
And lapwinges, that wel conith lie;
This company' han forlete ther grace.
Long while the Pellican was oute,
But at laſt he commith againe,
And brought with him the phenix ſtoute;
The Griffon would have flow ful faine,
His foulis flewen as thicke as raine,
The phenix tho began 'hem chace;
To flie from him it was in vaine,
For he did vengeaunce and no grace.
He flewe 'hem doune without mercy;
There eſtarte neither fre ne thrall;
On him they caſt a rufull crie
Whan that the Griffon doun was fall;
He bete him not, but flewe hem all:
Where he 'hem drove no man may trace:
Under the erth methought they yall;
Alas, they had a feble grace!
The Pellican then axid right
For my writing if I have blame
Who then wol for me ſight of flight?
Who ſhullin ſheldè me from ſhame?
He that yhad a maide to dame,
And the Lambè that ſlaine ywas,
Shal ſheldin me from goſtly blame,
For erthely harme is Godd'is grace.
Therfore I pray every man
Of my writing have me excuſed,
This writing writeth the Pellican,
That thus theſe peple hath diſpiſed;
For I am freſhe fully adviſed
I n'ill not maintene his menace,
For the devill is ofte diſguiſed
To bring a man to evil grace.
Witith the Pelli'can and not me,
For herof I n'il not avowe
In hie ne lowe, ne no degre,
But as fable take it ye mowe.
To holy churche I will me bowe;
Eche man to' amende him Chriſte ſende ſpace!
And for my writing me alowe
He that' is almighty for his grace.

Here endith the Plowman's Tale.

THE PROLOGUE;

Or, The mery adventure of the Pardonere and Tapſtere at the Inn at Canterbury.

When all this freſh felefhip were come to Cantirbury,
As ye have herde to fore, with Talys glad and merry,
Som of ſotill ſentence of vertue and of lore,
And ſom of othir mirthis, for them that hold no ſtore
Of wiſdom, ne of holynes, ne of chivalry,
Nethir of vertuouſe matere, but to foly
Leyd wit and luſtis all to ſuch japis
As hurlewaynes meyne in every hegg that rapes
Thorough unſtabill mynde, ryght as the levis grene
Stondewn ageyn the wedir, ryght ſo by them I mene:
But no more hereof nowe at this ilche tyme,
In faving of my ſentence, my Prolog, and my ryme.
They toke ther in, and loggit them at mydmorowe I trowe,
Alle chekker of the hope that many a man doth knowe;
Their Hooſt of Southworke, that with them went, as ye have herde to fore,
That was rewler of them al, of las and eke of more,
Ordeyned their dyner wiſely or they to chirch went,
Such vitaillis as he ſonde in town, and for noon othir ſent.
The Pardonere behelde the beſynes, how ſtatis wer iſervid,
Diſkennyng hym al prively, and a ſyde ſwervid:
The hoſtelere was ſo halowid fro o plaſe to another,
He toke his ſtaffe to the Tapſtere: Welcom myn own brother,
Quod ſhe, with a frendly loke, al redy for to kys;
And he, as a man i lerned of ſuch kyndnes,
Braeyd hir by the myddyll, and made hir gladly chere,
As thoughe he had iknowen hir al the rathir yeer:
She halid hym into the tapſtry there hir bed way was makid;
Lo, here I ligg, (quod ſhe) myſelf al nyght al nakid,
Without manny's company ſyn my love was dede,
Jenkyn Harpour, yf ye hym knewe: from fete to the hede
Was not a luſtier perſone to daunce ne to lepe
Then he was, thoughe I it ſey: and therwith to wepe
She made, and with hir napron feir and white ywaſh
She wypid ſoft hir eyen for teris that ſhe out laſh
As grete as any mylſtone: upward gon they ſtert
For love of her ſwetyng, that ſat ſo nighe hir hert:
She wept and waylid, and wrong her hondis, and made much to done,
For they that leven ſo paſſyngly ſuch trowes they have echon:
She ſnyffith, ſighith, and ſhoke hire hede, and made rouful cher:
Benedicite! quod the Pardonere, and toke hir by the ſwere,
Yee make ſorwe inowgh, quod he, your life though ye ſhuld leſe.
It is no wondir, quod ſhe than; and therwith ſhe gan to ſneſe.
Aha! al hole, quod the Pardonere; your penaunce is ſomewhat paſſid.
God forbede it els! quod ſhe, but it were ſomwhat laſſid;
I might nat lyve els, thowe wotiſt, and it ſhuld long endure:
Now bleſſid be God of mendemente of hele and eke of cure!

Quod the Pardonere tho anoon, and toke hir by the chynne,
And ſayd to hir theſe wordis tho; Alas that love is ſyn!
So kynd a lover as ye be oon, and ſo trew of herte,
For be my trewe conſcience yit for yewe I ſmerte,
And ſhall this month hereafter, for your ſoden diſeſe;
Now wele wer hym ye lovid ſo he coud you pleſe;
I durſt ſwere upon a book that trewe he ſhuld yewe fynd,
For he that is ſo yore dede is grene in yeur mynd.
Ye made me a ſory man; I dred ye wold have ſtervid.
Graunt mercy, gentil Sir, quod ſhe, that ye unaſervid:
Yee be a nobile man, ibleſſid mut yee be:
Sit down; ye ſhul drynk. Nay I wis (quod he)
I am faſtyng yit, myne own hert'is rote.
Faſtyng yit, alaſs! quod ſhe; therof I can gode bote.
She ſtert into the town and fet a py al hote,
And ſet to fore the Pardonere; Jenken, I ween I n'ote
Is that your name I yow prey. I wis, myn own ſuſtir,
So was I enformed of them that did me foſtir.
And what is yowrs? Kitt, iwis; ſo cleped me my dame.
And Godd'is bleſſing have thow, Kitt; now broke wel thy name;
And privylich unlaſid his both eyen liddes,
And lokid hir in the viſage paramour and amyddis,
And ſighed there with a litil time that ſhe it here myghte,
And gan to rown and ſeyn this ſong, *Now, love, then do me righte.*
Ete and be merry, quod ſhe; why breke ye nowt your faſt?
To wait more feleſhip it were but work in waſte.
Whi make ye ſo dull chere? for your love at home?
Nay, forſooth, myne own hert, it is for you aloon.
For me? alas! what ſey ye? that wer a ſimple prey.
Trewlich yit, quod the Pardonere, it is as I yewe ſey.
Ye, etith and beth mery; we wol ſpeke therof ſone;
Brewyd eat dredith feir: it is mery to be a loon;
For by our Lady Mary, that bare Jeſus on hir arm,
I coud nevir love yit but it did me harm,
For evir my manere hath be to love ovirmuch.
Now Criſt'is bleſſing, quod the Pardonere, go with al ſuch.
Lo! how the clowdis worchyn ech man to mete his mach,
For trewly, gentil Criſtian, I uſe the ſame tach,
And have ydo many a yer: I may it nat forbere,
For Kynd wull have his cours though men the contrary ſwere:
And therwith he ſtert up ſmertly and caſt down a grote.
What ſhal this do, gentil Sir? Nay, Sir, for my cote
I n'old ye payd a peny her and ſo ſone pas.
The Pardoner ſwore his grette othe he wold pay no las.
I wis, Sir, it is ovir do, but ſith it is yowr will
I woll putt it in my purſe leſt yee it take in ill
To refuſe your curteſy: and therwith ſhe gan to bowe.
Now trewly, quod the Pardoner, yeur maners been to lowe,
For had ye countid ſtreytly, and nothing left behind,
I might have wele ydemed that ye be unkind,
And eke untrewe of hert, and ſooner me forgete,
But ye liſt be my treſorer, for we ſhall offter mete.
Now certen, quod the Tapſter, ye have a rede ful even,
As wold to God ye couth as wele undo my ſweven
That I my ſelf did mete this nyght that is ypaſſid,
How I was in a chirch when it was all ymaſſid,
And was in my devocioune tyl ſervice was al doon,
Tyl the preeſt and the clerk boyſtly bad me goon,
And put me out of the chirch with an egir mode.
Now Seynt Daniel, quod the Pardonere, your ſwevyn turn to gode,
And I woll halſow it to the beſt, have it in yeur mynd,
For comyngly of theſe ſwevyngs the contrary men ſhul fynd.
Ye have be a lover glad, and litil joy yhad;
Plick up a luſty hert, and be mery and glad,
For ye ſhul have an huſbond that ſhall yewe wed to wyve,
That ſhal love yewe as hertly as his own lyve.
The preeſt that put yew out of chirch ſhall lede you in ageyne,
And helpe to yeur mariage with al his might and main.
This is the ſweven al and ſom Kit; how likith the?
Be my trowith wondir wele, bleſſid mut thou we be?
Then toke he leve at that tyme, tyll he come eſtſone,
And went to his feleſhip (as it was to doon)
Thoughe it be no grete holynes to prech this ilk matere,
And that ſom liſt to her it, yit, Sirs, ner the latter
Endurith for a while and ſuffrith them that woll,
And ye ſhull her how the Tapſter made the Pardoner pull
Garlik all the long nyghte til it was ner end day;
For the more chere ſhe made of love the falſir was her lay;
But litil charge gaff ſhe therof, tho ſhe acquit his while,
For ethir is thought and tent was othir to begile,
As ye ſhul here hereaftir, when tyme comith and ſpaſe
To meve ſuch matere.—But now a litil ſpaſe
I wol return me ageyn to the company,
The Knyghte and al the feleſhip, and nothing for to ly.

Whan they wer al yloggit, as ſkil wold and reſon,
Everich aftir his degre, to chirch then was ſeſon
To pas and to wend to make their offringis,
Righte as their devocioune was, of ſilver broch and rynges;
Then at chirch dorr the curteſy gan to ryſe
Tyl the Knyght, of gentilnes that knewe right wele the guyſe,
Put forth the prelatis, the Parſon, and his fere,
A Monk that took the ſpryngill with a manly chere,
And did as the manere is, moilid al their patis
Everich aftir othir, righte as they were of ſtatis:
The Frer feynyd fetouſly the ſpryngill for to hold
To ſpryng oppon the remnaunt, that for his cope he n'old
Have laſt that occupacioune in that holy plaſe,
So longid his holy conſcience to ſe the Nonn'is faſe.
The Knyght went with his compers toward the holy ſhryne
To do that they wer com for, and aftir for to dyne:
The Pardoner and the Miller, and othir lewde ſotes,
Sought 'hem ſelf in the chirch right as lewd gotes,
Pyrid faſt and pourid high upon the glaſe,
Counterfetyng gentilmen the armies for to blaſe,
Diſkynering faſt the peyntur, and for the ſtory mournid,
And a red al ſo right as rammys hornyd.
He berith a balſtaff, quod the toon, and els a rakid end;
Thow faileſt, quod the Miller, thow haſt nat wel thy mynd;
It is a ſpere, yf thow canſt ſe, with a prik tofore,
To puſh a down his enmy, and through the ſhoulder bore.
Peſe, quod the Hooſt of Southwork; let ſtond the wyndow glaſid;
Goith up and doith your offerynge; ye ſemith half amaſid:
Sith ye be in company of honeſt men and good
Worchith ſomwhat aftir them, and let the kynd of brode
Pas for a tyme; I hold it for the beſt,
For who doith aftir company may live the bet in reſt.
Then paſſid they forth boyſtly gogling with their hedis,
Knelid adown to fore the ſhrine, and hertlich their bedis
They preyd to Seint Thomas in ſuche wyſe as they couth;
And ſith the holy relikes ech man with his mowith
Kiſſid, as a goodly monk the names told and taught,
And ſith to othir places of holynes they raught,
And wer in their devocioune tyl ſervice wer al doon,
And ſith they drowgh to dynerward as it drew to noon,
Then, as manere and cuſtom is, ſignes there they bought,
For men of contre ſhuld know whome they had ſought.
Eche man ſet his ſilver in ſuch thing as they likid,
And in the meen while the Miller had ypikid
His boſom ful of ſignys of Caunterbury brochis,
Though the Pardoner and he pryvely in hir pouchis,
They put them afterwards, that noon of them it wiſt,
Save the Sompner ſeid ſomwhat, and ſeyd to he liſt
Halff part, quod he, prively rowning on their ere;
Huſht! pees, quod the Miller, ſeiſt thou nat the Frere,
How he lowrith undir his hood with a doggiſh eye?
Hit ſhuld be a privy thing that he coud nat aſpy;
Of every craft he can ſomwhat our Lady gave hym ſorowe!
Amen, tho quod the Sompner, on eve and eke on morowe:
So curſid a Tale he told of me the devill of hell hem ſpede,
And me, but yf I pay him wele and quyte wele his mede.
Yf it hap homward that ech man tell his Tale,
As we did hiderward, though we ſhuld ſet at ſale
All the ſhrewdnes that I can, I woll hym nothing ſpare,
That I n'ol touch his takerd ſomwhat of his care.
They ſet their ſignys upon their hedes, and ſom oppon their capp,
And ſith to the dynerward they gan for to ſtapp.
Every man in his degre wiſh and toke his ſete,
As they were wont to doon at ſoper and at mete,
And wer in ſilence for a tyme tyl good ale gan ariſe,
And then, as nature axith, as theſe old wiſe
Knowen wele, when veynys been ſomwhat replete,
The ſpirits wol ſtere, and alſo metis ſwete
Cauſen oft myrthis for to be ymevid,
And eke it was no tyme tho for to be ygrevid:
Every man in his wyſe made hertly chere,
Telling his felowe of ſportys and of chere,
And of othir mirthis that fellyn by the wey,
As cuſtom is of pylgryms, and hath been many a dey.
The Hooſt leid to his ere, of Southworke as ye knowe,
And thenkid al the company both high and lowe,
So wele kepeing the covenaunt in Southwork that was made,
That every man ſhuld by the wey with a Tale glade
All the whole company in ſhorting of the wey;
And al is wele performed: but than now thus I ſey,
That we muſt ſo homeward eche man tel anothir.
Thus we wer accordit, and I ſhuld be a rathir
To ſet yewe in governaunce by right ful jugement.
Trewly Hooſt, quod the Frer, that was all our aſſent,

With a litil more that I ſhall ſey therto :
Yee graunted of yeur curteſy that we ſhuld alſo
All the hole company ſope with yewe at nyght ?
Thus I trowe that it was ; what ſey you, Sir Knyght ?
It ſhal nat nede, quod the Hooſt, to axe no witnes ;
Your record is good I nowe ; and of yeur gentilnes
Yit I prey yew efft ageyn ; for by Seynt Thomas ſhryne
And ye woll hold covenaunt I woll hold myne.
Now trewely Hooſt, quod the Knyght, ye have right wel yſeyd ;
And as towching my perſone I hold me payde ;
And ſo I trowe that al doith : Sirs, what ſey yee ?
The Monk and eke the Marchaunte and al ſeid Ye.
Then al this aftir-mete, I hold it for the beſt;
To ſport and pley us, quod the Hooſt, eche man as hym leſt,
And go by tyme to ſoper and to bed alſo,
So mowe we erly ryſen our jorney for to do.
The Knyght aroſe therwithal, and caſt on a freſher gown,
And his ſone anothir, to walk in the town,
And ſo did all the remnaunt that were of that aray,
That had their chaungis with them, they made them freſh and gay,
Sortid them togidir, right as their luſtis lay,
As they were more uſid travelling by the way.
The Knyght with his meyne went to ſee the walle
And the wards of the town, as to a knyght befall,
Deviſing ententiflich the ſtrengthis al about,
And apointid to his ſone the perell and the dout
For ſhot of arblaſt and of bowe, and eke for ſhot of gonne,
Unto the wardis of the town, and how it might be wone ;
And al defence ther ageyn aſtir his intent
He declarid compendiouſly, and al that evir he ment
He ſone perſeyvid every poynt, as he was ful abil.
To armes and to travaile and perſone covenabill
He was of all factur aftir fourm of kynd,
And for to deme his governaunce it ſemed that his mynd
Was much in his lady that he lovid beſt,
That made hym offt to wake when he ſhuld have his reſt.
The Clerk that was of Oxenforth onto the Sompnore ſeyd ;
Me ſemeth of grete clerge that thow art amayde,
For thou putteſt on the Frer in maner of repreff,
That he knoweth falſhede, vice, and eke a theff ;
And I it hold vertuouſe and right commendabill
To have very knowlech of thinges reprovabill ;
For who ſo may eſchew it, and let it pas by,
And els he might fall theron unward and ſodenly.
And thoughe the Frer told a Tale of a Sompnour,
Thow oughtiſt for to take it for no diſhonour,
For of al craftis and of eche degre
They be not al perfite, but ſom nyce be.
Lo ! what is worthy, ſeyd the Knight, for to be a clerk ;
To ſommon among us them this mocioune was ful
I comend his wittis and eke his clerge, [derke :
For of ether part he ſaveth honeſte.
The Monk toke the Parſone then and the grey Frer,
And preyd them for curteſy for to go in fere :
I have ther acquaintaunce that al this yeres thre
Hath preyd hym by his lettris that I hym wold ſe ;
And ye my brothir in habit and in poſſeſſioune,
And now I am here methinketh it is to doon,
To preve it in dede what chere he wold me make,
And to yew my frende alſo for my ſake.
They went forth togidir talking of holy matere,
But woot ye wele in certeyn they had no mind on watere
To drynk at that tyme, when they wer met in fere,
For of the beſt that myght be founde, and therewith mery chere,
They had, it is no doubte ; for ſpycys and eke wine
Went round about the gaſtoyn and eke the ruyne.
The Wyfe of Bath was ſo wery, ſhe had no wyl to walk,
She toke the Priores by the honde ; Madam, wol ye ſtalk,
Pryvely into the garden to ſe the herbes growe,
And aftir with our hoſt'is wife in hir parlour rowe ?
I wol gyve yewe the wyne and ye ſhul me alſo,
For tyl we go to ſoper we have naughis ellis to do.
The Priores, as woman taught of gentil blood and hend,
Aſſentid to hir counſel, and forth gon they wend,
Paſſyng forth ſoftly into the herbery,
For many a herb grewe for ſewe and ſurgery,
And all the aleys feir, and parid, and raylid, and ymakid,
The ſavige and the iſope yfrethid and yſtakid,
And othir beddis by and by freſh ydight,
For comers to the hooſte righte a ſportful ſight.
The Marchaunt and the Mancipill, the Miller and the Reve,
And the Clerk of Oxenforth, to townward gan they meve,
And al the othir meyne, and lafft noon at home
Save the Pardoner, that pryvelich when al they wer goon
Stalkid into the tapſtry ; for nothing wold he leve
To make his covenaunte in certeyn that ſame eve ;
He wold be loggit with hir, that was his hole ententioune.
But hap and eke Fortune, and all the conſtellacioune,
Was clere hym ageyns, as ye ſhul aftir here ;
For hym had better be yloggit al nyght in a myere
Then he was the ſame nyght or the ſun was up ;
For ſuch was his fortune he drank without the cupp ;
But thereof wiſt he no delay ; ne *No man of us alle*
May have that high cunnyng to know what ſhall befall.
He ſtappid into the tapſtry wondir pryvely,
And ſond hir ligging lirylong with half ſlopy eye.

Pourid fellich undir hir hood, and fawe all his comyng,
And lay ay ſtill, as naught ſhe knewe, but feynid hir ſlepyng.
He put his hond to hir breſt; Awake, quod he, awake.
A, *benedicite!* Sir, who wiſt yew her? out tho I myght betake
Priſoner, quod the Tapſtere, being al aloon;
And therwith breyd up in a frite, and began to groon.
Now ſith ye be my priſoner yeld yew now, quod he.
I muſt nedis, quod ſhe, I may nothyng ſle;
And eke I have no ſtrengith, and am but yong of age,
And alſo *It is no maſtry to catch a mouſe in a cage*
That may no where ſtert out, but cloſid wondir faſt;
And eke, Sir, I tell yew though I had grete haſt
Ye ſhuld have coughed when ye com. Wher lern you curteſy?
Now trewlich I muſt chide, for of right pryvety
Women ben ſom tyme of day when they be aloon.
Wher coud I yew prey when ye com eſtſone?
Nowe mercy, dere ſwetyng! I wol do ſo no more;
I thank you an hundrit ſithis; and alſo by your lore
I wol do hereaftir in what plaſe that I com:
But lovers, Kitt, ben evil avyſid full oft, and to lom;
Wherfore I prey you hertlich hold me excuſed,
And I behote yew trewly it ſhall no more be uſid.
But now to our purpoſe: how have ye fare
Sith I was wyth you laſt? that is my moſt care;
For yf yee eylid eny thing othir wiſe then good,
Trewly it wold chaunge my chere and my blood.
I have farid the wers for yewe, quod Kitt; do ye no drede
God that is above? and eke ye had no nede
For to congir me, God woot, wyth your nygromancy,
That have no more to vaunte me but oonly my body,
And yf it were diſteynid then wer I ondo:
I wis I trowe, Jenkyn, ye be nat to truſt to;
For evir more ye clerkis con ſo much in book
Yee wol wynn a woman at firſt look.
Thought the Pardonere, this goth wele, and made his betar chere,
And axid of hir ſoftly, Love! who ſhall ligg here
This nyght that is to comyng? I prey yewe tell me.
I wis it is grete nede to tell yewe, quod ſhe:
Make it nat overqueynt though you be a clerk;
Ye knowe wele inough iwis by loke, by word, by work.
Shal I com than, Criſtian, and feſe awey the cat?
Shal ye com? *per benedicite!* what queſtion is that?
Wherfor I prey you hertly to be my counſail?
Comyth ſomwhat late, and for nothing faill;
The dorr ſhall ſtond that up; put it from you ſoft,
But be wele avyſid ye wake nat them on loſſt,
Care ye nat, quod Jenkin, I can theron at beſt;
Shal no man for my ſtepyng be wakid of his reſt.
Anon they dronk the beverage, and were of oone accord,
As it ſemed by their chere and alſo by their word;
And al a ſtaunce ſhe lovid hym wele, ſhe toke hym by the ſwere,
As though he had lernyd cury favel of ſom old frere.
The Pardoner plukkid out of his purs I trow the dowry,
And toke it Kitt in hir hond, and bad her pryvely
To orden a rere ſopor for them both to, alſo,
A cawdell ymade with ſwete wyne and with ſugir
For trewly I have no talent to ete in your abſence,
So longith my hert toward yew to be in yewr preſence.
He toke his leve, and went his wey as though nothing wer,
And met wyth al the felſhip; but in what plaſe nc wher
He ſpake no word therof, but held hym cloſe and ſtyll,
As he that hopid ſikirlich to have had al his wyll,
And thought many a mery thought by hymſelf aloon:
I am a loggit, thought he beſt, how ſo evir it goon;
And thoughe it have coſtid me, yit wol I do my peyn.
For to pike hir purs to nyghte and win my coſt ageyn.
Now leve I the Pardonere tyll that it be eve,
And wol returne me ageyn righte, ther as I did leve.
Whan al wer com togider in their herbergage
The Hooſt of Southwork, as ye knowe, that had no ſpice of rage,
But al thing wrought prudenciall, as ſobir man and wiſe;
Now wol we to the ſoup, Sir Knyght, ſeith yeur avyſe,
Quod the Hooſt ful curteyſly, and in the ſame wiſe.
The Knyght anſwer'd him ageyn, Sir as ye deryſe
I muſt obey, ye woot wele; but yf I faill wytt
Then takith theſe prelatis to yewe, and waſhith and go ſit;
For I woll be yewr Marchall and ſerve yewe, ech one,
And then the officers and I to ſoper ſhall we gone.
They wiſh, and ſett right as he bad, eche man wyth his fere,
And begonne to talk of ſportis and of chere
That they had the aftir-mete whiles they wer out,
For othir occupacioune tyll they wer ſervid about
They had nat at that tyme, but every man kitt a loſſ;
But the Pardoner kept hym cloſe, and told nothing of
The myrth and hope that he had, but kept it for hymſelf;
And thoughe he did it is no fors, for he had nede to ſolve
Long or it were mydnyght, as ye ſhul her ſone,
For he met with his love in crokeing of the moon.
They wer yſervyd honeſtly, and eche man held hym payde,
For of o manere of ſervice their ſoper was araide,
As ſkill wold and reſon, ſith the leſt of all
Payid ylik: much, for growing of the gall:

But yit as curtefy axith, though it were ſom dele ſtreight,
The ſtatis that were above had of the feyreſt endreyte;
Wherfor they did their gentilnes ageyn to all the rout,
They dronken wyne at their coſt onys round about.
Now paſs I lightly ovir. When they ſoupid had
Tho that were of governaunce, as wiſe men and ſad,
Went to their reſt, and made no more to doon,
But Miller and the Coke drouken by the moon
Twyes to eche othir in the repenyng; [to ſing
And when the Pardoner them eſpy'd anoon he gan
Deuhill me this bourdon, chokelyng in his throte,
For the Tapſter ſhuld here of his mery note:
He clepid to hym the Sompnour, that was his own diſcipill,
The Yeman and the Reve, ond the Mancipill,
And ſtoden ſo belowyng; for nothing wold they
Tyl the tyme that it was well within eve. [leve
The Hooſt of Southwork herd them wele, and the Marchaunt both,
As they wer at a countis, and wexen ſomewhat wroth,
But yet they preyd them curteyſly to reſt for to wend.
And ſo they did all the rout; they dronk and made an end.
And eche man drought to *eaſly* to ſlepe and take his reſt
Save the Pardoner, that drew apart, and weytid by a cheſte
For to hide hymſelf tyl the candill wer out:
And in the meen while, have ye no deute,
The Tapſter and hir paramour, and the hoſteler of the houſe,
Sitt togidir pryvelich, and of the beſt gotſe
That was yfound in town and yſet at ſale
They had there of ſufficiaunt, and dronk but litill ale;
And ſit and ete the cawdell for the Pardoner that was made,
With ſugir and with ſwete wyne, right as hymſelf bade;
So he that payd for all in feer had not a twynt,
For oft is more better ymerkid then ymynt:
And ſo farid he ful right as ye have yherd,
But *Who is that a woman cowd not make bis berd*,
And ſhe wer therabout, and ſet hir wytt therto?
Ye woot wele I ly nat, and wher I do or no
I wol nat here termyn it, leſt ladies ſtond in plaſe
Or els gentil women, for leſing of my grace
Of daliaunce and of ſpottis and of goodly chere;
Therfor anenſt their eſtatis I wol in no manere
Deme ne determyn, but of lewd kitts,
As tapſters, and othir ſuch that hath wyly wytts,
To pike meanys purſis, and eke to bler their eye;
So wele they make ſeme ſoth when they falſeſt by.
Now of Kitt Tapſter, and of hir paramour,
And the hoſteler of the houſe, that ſit in Kittis bour,
When they had ete and dronk right in the ſame plaſe,
Kitt began to rendir out all things as it was;
The wowing of the Pardoners and his coſt alſo,
And how he hopid for to lygg al nyght wyth hir alſo;
But therof he ſhall be ſikir as of God'is cope;
And ſodenly kiſſid her paramour, and ſeyd, We ſhul ſclope
Togidir hul by hul, as we have many a nyght,
And yf he com and make noyſe, I prey yewe dub hym Knyght.
Yes, Dame, quod hir paramour, be thou not agaſt;
This is his own ſtaff thou ſeyſt, therof he ſhall ſtaſt.
Now trewly, quod the hoſtler, and he com by my lot
He ſhall drink for Kittis love wythout cup or pot;
And he be ſo hardy to wake eny gift [miſt;
I make a vowe to the pecock there ſhal wake a ſoul
And aroſe up therewithal and toke his leve anoon:
It was a ſhrewid company; they had ſervid ſo many oon.
With ſuch manere of feleſhip ne kepe I never to dele,
Ne no man that lovith his worſhip and his hele.
Quod Kitt to hir paramour, Ye muſt wake a whyle,
For trewlich I am ſikir that within this myle
The Pardoner wol be comyng, his hete to awage,
But loke ye pay hym redelich to kele his corage;
And therfor, love, diſchance yewe not tyll this chek
No, for God, Kitt, that wol I no. [be do.
Then Kitt went to bed, and blewe out all the light,
And by that tyme it was ner hond quarter nyght.
Whan all was ſtill, the Pardoner gan to walk,
As glad as eny goldfynch that he herd no man talk,
And dorwghe to Kittis droward to herken and to lift,
And went to have fond the dor up; but the haſp and eke the twiſt
Held hym out a whils, and the lok alſo;
Yit trowid he no gile, but went ner to,
And ſcrapid the dorr welplich, and wynyd wyth his mowith
After a doggis lyden, as nere as he couith.
Awey, dog, with evill deth! quod he that was within,
And made hym all redy the dorr to unpin.
A! thought the Pardoner, tho I trow my berd be made;
The Tapſter hath a paramour, and hath made them glade
With the cawdell that I ordeyned for me, as I gueſs;
Now the devill hir ſpede, ſuch oon as ſhe is,
She ſeid I had ycongerid hir; our Lady gyve hir ſorowe;
Now wold to God ſhe wer in ſtokis tyl I ſhuld hir borowe,
For ſhe is the falſeſt that evir yit I knewe;
To pik the mony out of my purs, Lord! ſhe made hir trewe.

Who ſawe evir ſo feyr or ſo glad a day,
And how ſote this ſeſon is entring into May?
The thruſtelis and the thruſshis, in this glad mornyng,
The ruddok and the goldfynch; but the nyghtingale
His amerous notis lo how he twynith ſmall!
Lo how the trees grenyth that nakid wer, and nothing
Bare this month afore but their ſommer clothing!
Lo how Nature makith for them everichone!
And as many as ther be he forgettith noone!
Lo how the ſeſon of the yere and Averell ſhouris
Doith the buſshis burgyn out bloſſoms and flouris!
Lo the prymeroſis how freſh they ben to ſene!
And many othir flouris among the graſis grene.
Lo how they ſpryng, and ſprede, and of divers hue!
Beholdith, and ſeith both rede, white and blue!
That luſty bin and comfortabill for mann'ys ſight!
For I ſey for myſelf it makith my hert to light.
Now ſith Almighty Soveryn hath ſent ſo feir adey
Let ſe now, as covenant is, in ſhorting of the wey,
Who ſhall be the firſt that ſhall unlace his male
In comfort of us al, and gyn ſome mery Tale;
For and we ſhuld now begyn to draw lot
Peraventure it might fal ther it ought not,
On ſom unluſty perſone that wer not wele awakid,
Or ſemybouſy ovyr eve, and had yſong and crakid
Somwhat ovir much: how ſhuld he than do:
For Who ſhuld tell a Tale he muſt have good wyll therto.
And eke ſom men faſtyng beth glewid and ybound
In their tongis; and ſom faſtyng beth nothyng jocound;
And ſom men in the morning ther mouthis beth adoun;
Tyll that they be charmyd their wordis woll not ſoun.
So thys is my concluſioune and my laſt knot,
It wer grete gentilnes to tell without lot.
By the rood of Bromholm, quod the Marchant tho,
As fer as I have failed, riden and ygo,
Sawe I nevir man yet tofore this ilk day
So wele coud rule a company as our Hoſt, in fay
His wordis ben ſo comfortabill, and comyth ſo in ſeſon,
That my wit is ovircome to make eny reſon
Contrary to his counſaill at myn ymagynacioune,
Wher'for I woll tell a Tale to your conſolacioune,
In enſampill to yowe that when that I have do
Anothir be right redy then for to tell, ryght ſo
To fulfyll our Hooſt'is wyll and his ordinaunce.
There ſhall no fawte be found in me: gode wyl ſhal be my chaunce:
With this I be excuſid of my rudines,
Altho' I cannot peynt my Tale, but tell it as it is,
Lepyng evir no ſentence, as ferforth as I may,
But tell yewe the yolke and put the white away.

THE MERCHANT'S SECOND TALE;

OR, THE HISTORY OF BERYN.

Whilom yeris paſſed in the old dawis [lawis,
When rightfullich by reſon governyd wer the
And pryncipally in the cete of Rome, that was ſo
rich,
And worthieſt in his dayes, and noon to him ilich
Of worſhip ne of wele, ne of governaunce,
For alle londis chriſtened ther' of had dotaunce,
And all othir natiouns, of what ſeith they were,
Whils the Emperour was hole, and in his paleys
I mainteynid in honour; and in Pop'is ſe [there
Rome was then obeied of all Criſtiante.
But ſarith ther'by as it doith by othir thingis;
For though nethir cete, regioune, ne kyngis,
Beth nat nowe ſo worthy as wer by olde tyme,
As we fynd in romaunces, in geſtis, and in ryme,
For all things doith waſt, and the mann'ys lyff
Is more ſhorter then it was; and our wittis fyve
Mowe nat comprehende now in our dieties
As ſom tyme myght theſe old wiſe poetes.
But ſith that terrene thinges ben nat perdurabill,
No mervaile is though Rome be ſomwhat variabill
Fro honour and fro wele ſith his frendis paſſid;
As many anothir town is payrid and ylaſſid
Within theſe few yeris, as we mowe ſe at eye;
Lo! Sirs, here faſt by Wynchelſe and Ry.
But yit the name is evir oon of Rome as it was
groundit
After *Remus & Romulus*, that firſt that cete ſoundit,
That brethren weren both to, as old bokis writen;
But of ther lef and governaunce I wol not now
enditen,
But of othir mater that fallith to my mynd;
Wher'for, gentill Sirs, ye that beth behind
Drawith ſomwhat nere thikker to a rout,
That my wordis may ſoune to eche man about.
Aftir theſe two brethren Romulus and Remus
Julius Cæſar was Emperour, that rightful was of
Domus.
This cete he governed nobilich wele,
And conquered many a regioune, acronicull doth
us telle;
For, ſhortly to conclude, al tho wer adverſaryes
To Rome in his dayis he made them tributaries;
So had he in ſubjectioune both frend and foon,
Of which I tell yew trewely Englond was oon.
Yit aftir Julius Cæſar, and ſith that Criſt was bore,
Rome was governed as wele as it was before,
And namelich in that tyme and in the ſame yeris
When it was governed by the Doſeperis;
As ſemeth wele by reſon, who ſo can entend,
That *O mann'ys wyt ne wyll may not comprehend*
The bouchеff and the myſcheff, as may many bedis;
Ther'ſor ther operaciouns, ther domes, and ther
dedes,
Were ſo egallich ydoon; for in all Criſten londis
Was noon that they ſparid for to mend wrongis.
Then Conſtantyne the Third, aftir theſe Doſiperis,
Was Emperour of Rome, and regnyd many yeris.
So, ſhortly to pas ovir, after Conſtantyn's dayis
Phus Auguſtinus, as ſongen is in layes,
That Conſtantyn'ys ſon, and of plener age,
Was Emperour ychoſe, as fill by heritage,
In whoſe tyme ſikerlich the ſeven Sages were
In Rome ydwelling decently; and yf yee luſt to lere
How they were yclepid, or I ferther goon,
I woll tell you the names of them everichoone,
And declare yeu the cauſe why they ther namys
The firſt was ycleped Sother Legiſeer, [here.
This is thus much for to ſey, as *man bering the hawe:*
And ſo he did trewly; for lewer he had be ſclawe
Then do or ſey eny thing that ſowned out of reſon,
So cleen was his conſcience yſet in trowith and
reſon.
Marcus Stoycus the ſecond, ſo pepill hym highte,
That is to mene in our conſtert, *a kepee of the right:*
And ſo he did full trewe; for the record and the
plees [ſees
He wrote them evir trewly, and took noon othir
But ſuch as was ordynid to take by the yere:
Now, Lord God! in Criſtendom I wold it were ſo
cleen.

The third Craſſus Aſulus among men clepid was,
An houſe of reſt, and eſe, and counſail, in every caſe:
For to onderſtond that was his name full right,
For evirmore the counſails he helpid wyth al his
Antonius Judeus the ſerth was yclepid, [myght
That was as much to meen, as wele me myght have
As any poſed of all the long yere, [clepid
That myght have made hym ſory or chongit onys chere,
But evirmore rejoycing, what that evir betid,
For his hert was evir mery, right as the ſomer
Summus Philopater was the fifft'is name, [bridd.
That thoughe men wold flee hym, or do hym al the ſhame,
Angir, or diſeſe, as evil as men couthe,
Yet wold he love them nevir the wers in hert ne in mowith.
His will was cleen undir his foot, and nothing hym above,
Ther'fore he was clepid *Fatbir of perfite love.*
The fixth and the ſevinth of theſe Sevin Sages
Was Stypio and Sithero, as thes word Aſtrolages
Was firname to them both aftir their ſciences;
For of aſtronomy ſikerlich the cours and all the fences
Bothe they knowhit wele inoughe, and wer right ſotil of art.
But now to othir purpoſe, for her I woll depart
As lightly as I can, and draw to my matere.
In that ſame tyme that theſe Sages were
Dwellyng thus in Room, a litill without the walles,
In the ſubarbis of the town, of chambris and of hallis,
And all other howſeing that to a lord belongit,
Was noon wythyn the cete, ne noon ſo wele behongit
With docers of highe pryſe, ne wallid ſo aboute,
As was a Senatours hous wythyn and eke withoute.
Favinus was his name, a worthe man and rich;
And, for to ſey ſhortlych, in Room was noon hym lyche.
His portis and his eſtris were full evenaunte
Of treſour and of lordſhyp; alſo the moſt vailant
He was, and eke ycom of high lynage:
And at laſt he toke a wyff like to his peerage;
For *Noriture and connyng, bewte and parentyne,*
Wer tho countid more worth than gold or ſylvir-fyne.
But now it is al othir in many mann'ys thought,
For *Mub yt now ymarried, and vertu ſet at nought.*
Fawnus and his worthy wyff wer to gidir aloon
Fyveteene wyntir fulliche, and iſſu had they noon,
Wher'for ther joyis wer not half parfite,
For uttirlich to have a child was al ther delite,
That myght enjoy ther heritage and weld their honour,
And eke when they were febill to their trew ſocoure.
Their faſtyng and their prayir, and all that evir they wrought,
As pilgrimage and almſded, ever they beſought
That God would of his goodnes ſom fruyte betwene them ſend:
Fro gynnyng of their ſpouſaill, the myddil, and the end,
This was their moſt beſynes, and all othir delites,
And eke this world'is rychis, they ſet at litil price.
So at laſt, as God wold, it fill oppon a dey,
As this lady fro chirchward went in the wey,
A child gan ſtere in her womb, as Godd'is wyl was,
Wher'of ſhe gan to mervill, and made ſhertir pas,
Wyth colour pale and eke wanne, and full in hevynes,
For ſhe had nevir tofore that day ſuch manere ſekenes.
The wymmen that with hir were gon to behold
The lady and her chere, but nothing they told,
But feir and ſoft wyth eſe homward they her led:
For her ſoden ſekenes ful ſore they were adred,
For ſhe was inlich gentil, kynd and amyabill,
And eke trewe of hert, and nothyng variabill.
She lovid God above all thing, and dred ſyn and ſhame,
And Agea ſikerly was her rightfull name.
So aftir, in breff tyme, when it was purſeyved
That ſhe had done a womans dede, and had a child conſeyvyd,
The joy that ſhe made ther may no tung tell;
And al ſo much, or more, yf I ne ly ſhell,
Favinus made in his behalf for this glad tyding,
That I trowe I leve the emperour ne the kyng
Made no bettir cher to wyff, ne no more myrth,
Then Fawnus to Agea. And when the tyme of birth
Nyghid ner and ner, aftir cours of kynd,
Wetith wele in certen that all the wyt and mynd
Of Fawnus was continuell of feir delyveraunce
Betwene Agea and his child, and made grete ordenaunce
Ageyn the tyme it ſhuld be bore, as it was for to doun.
So as God wold whan tyme cam Agea had a ſon;
But joy that Fawnus made was dobil tho to fore
When that he knew in certen ſhe had a ſon ybore,
And ſent anoon for nurſis four, and no leſs,
To reule this child. Afterward as yeris did pas,
The child was kept ſo tenderly that it throff wel the bet,
For what the noriſhes axit anoon it was yfett.
In his chambir it noriſhed was; to town it mut nat go:
Fawnus lovid it ſo cherely hit myght nat part hym fro.
It was ſo feyr a creature as myght be on lyve
Of lymys and of ſetours, and growe wondir blyve.
This child that I of tell, Berinus was his name,
Was ovir much cheriſhed, which turned hym into grame,
As yee ſhull here aftir, when time comyth and ſpaſe; [*plaſe:*
For *Aftir ſwete the ſoure comyth full oft in many a*
For as ſone as he coud go and alſo ſpeke
All that he ſet his ey on, or aftir lift to beke,
Anoon he ſhuld it have, for no man hym wernyd. [nyd
But it had be wel bettir he had be wele yler-

Noriture and gentilnes, and had yhad ſome hey,
For it fill ſo aftir wyth what child he did pley
Yf the pley ne likid hym he wold breke his hede,
Or wyth a knyff hym hurt ryght nygh hond to be dede:
For ther nas knyght ne ſquyer in his fadirs houſe,
That thought his owne perſone moſte corajouſe,
That did or ſeyd eny thing Bérinus to diſpleſe
That he n'old ſpetouſly anoon oppon him reſe;
Wher'of his fadir had joy and his modir alſo:
Yet it ſemith to many a man it was nat wiſely do.
When Beryn paſſed was ſeven yere, and grew in more age,
He wrought ful many an evil chek; for ſuch was his corage
That there he wiſt or might do eny evill dede
He wold nevir ſeſe for ought that men him ſeid,
Whe'fore many a pore man ful oft was agrevid;
But Fawnus and Agea ful light theron belevid:
And thoughe men wold pleyne ful ſhort it ſhuld availe,
For Fawnus was ſo myghty, and cheff of all counſaill
With Auguſtyn the Emperour, that all men hym drad,
And lete pas ovir miſchefe and harmys that they had.
Bérinus ferthermore lovid well the diſe,
And for to pley at hazard, and held ther' of grete pryſe,
And all othir gamys that loſery was in,
And evirmore he loſt, and nevir myght wyn.
Berynus at hazard many a nyght he wakid,
And oft tyme it fill ſo that he cam hom al nakid:
And that was all his joy, for right wele he knew
That Agea his modir wold cloth hym newe.
Thus Berynus lyvid, as I have told to fore,
Tyll he was of the age of eightene yere or more.
But othir whyls amongis for pleyntis that were grete
Fawnus made amendis, and put them in quiete:
So was the fadir cauſe the ſone was ſo wyld;
And ſo have many mo ſuch of his own child
Be cauſe of his undoyng, al we mowe ſe al day;
For *Thing ytake is hard to put awey,*
As bors that evir trettid, trewlich I yew telle,
It were hard to make hym aftir to ambill welle:
Ryght ſo by Beryn; when he had his luſt and wyll when he was lite
It ſhuld be hevy afterward to reve his old delite,
Save the whele of Fortune, that no man may withſtonde,
For every man on lyve ther'on he is gond;
O ſpoke ſhe turnyd bakward, righte at high noone,
All ageyn Berſnus, as ye ſhull here ſone.
Agea his modir fell in grete ſikenes,
And ſent aftir huſbond wyth wordis hire to lis,
And for ſhe wold tell hym hir hole hert'is wyll
Er ſhe out of the world partid, as it was right and ſkill.
When Fawnus was ycome, and ſaw ſo rodyleſe
Hys wyff that was ſo dere, that for love he cheſe,

No mervell though his hert wer in grete morning,
For he purſeyvyd fullich ſhe drewe to hir endyng:
Yit made he othir chere then in his hert was
To put awey diſcomfort, diſſimilying wyth his faſe
The hevynes of his hert: wyth chere he did it cloſe,
For ſuch a manner craft ther is wyth them can gloſe;
Save that tournyth all to cautele: but Fawnus did nat ſo,
For wetith wele in certeyn his hert was full of wo
For his wyff Agea; and yit for craft he couth
The teris fro his eyin ran doun by his mowith:
When he ſaw the pangis of deth comyng ſo faſt
Oppon his wyff Agea almoſt his hert to braſt.
Agea lyfft up hir eyen, and beheld the chere
Of hir huſbond Fawnus, that was ſo trew a fere,
And ſeyd, Sir, why do ye thus? this is an elying fare
In comfort of us both, yf yee might ſpare
And put awey thys hevynes whyle that yee and I
Myght ſpeke of othir thyngis, for Deth me nyghith nygh,
For to body ne to ſoule this vailyth nat a karſe.
Now tellyth on, quod Fawnus, and I wol lete it
For the time of talkying as wele as I may [pas
But out of my remembraunce onto my endyng day
Yeur deth woll nevir, I woot it wele, but evir be in my mynd.
Then, good Sir, quod Agea, beth to my ſoule kynd
When my body is out of ſight, for therto have I nede,
For truer make then yee be in word ne in dede
Had nevir woman, ne more kyndnes
Hath ſhewed unto his make, I know right wele iwis:
Now wold ye ſo her after in hert be as trewe,
To lyve wythout make, and on yeur ſone rewe,
That litill hath ylernid ſithens he was bore:
Let hym have no ſtepmodir, for children have tofore
Comelich they lovith nat: wherfore wyth hert I prey
Have chere onto yeur ſone aftir my endyng day;
For ſo God me help and I lafft yew behynd
Shuld nevir man on lyve bryng it in my mynd
To be no more yweddit, but lyve ſoule aloon.
Now yee know all my wyll, good Sir, think ther'on.
Certis, quod Fawnus, whils I have wyttis fyve
I think nevir aftir yew to have another wyff.
The preeſt was com therwythall for to do hir rightis;
Fawnus toke his leve, and all the othir knyghtis,
Hir kyndrid and frendis kiſſed hir echone:
It is no nede to axe wher ther was dole or noon.
Agea caſt her ey up, and lokid all aboute,
And wold have kiſſid Beryn, but then was he wythoute,

Pleying to the hazard, as he was wont to doon,
For as ſone as he had ete he wold ren out anoon;
And when ſhe ſaw he was not ther that ſhe thought moſt on
Hire ſekenes and hire mournyng berſt her hert anoon.
A damſell tofore that was ron into the toune
For to ſeche Beryn, that pleyed for his gowne,
And had almoſt loſt it, right as the damſell cam,
And ſwore and ſtarid as he was wood, as longit to the game.
The damſell ſeyd to Beryn, Sir, ye muſt com home,
For but ye hygh blyve that yee wer ycome
Your mothir woll be dede; ſhe is yit on lyve:
Yf ye wol ſpeke wyth her yee muſt hygh blyve.
Who bad ſo, lewd Kitt? Your fadir, Sir, quod ſhe.
Go home, lewd viſenag, that evil mut thow the!
Quod Beryne to the damſell, and gan her fray and feer,
And bad the devill of hell hir ſhould to tere.
Haſt thow ought els to do but let me of my game?
Now by God in hevin, by Peter, and by Jame,
Quoth Beryn in grete angir, and ſwore be book and bell,
Reherſying many namys mo than me lyſt to tell,
N'er thow my fadirs meſſenger wer thou ſhuldiſt nevir ete brede:
I had levir my modir and alſo thou wer dede
Then I ſhuld leſe the game that I am nowgh in;
And ſmote the damſell undir the ere, the weet gon upward ſpyn:
The death of Agea he ſet at litill pryſe;
So in that wrath frolick Beryn threw the dyſe,
And loſt wyth that ſame caſt al was leyde adown,
And ſtert up in a wood rage, and ballid on his crown,
And ſo he did the remnaunt, as many as wold abyde;
But for drede of Fawnus his felawis gan to hyde,
And nevir had wyll, ne liſt, wyth Beryn for to fyght,
But evir redy to pley and wyn what they myght.
The deth of Agea ſprang about the towne,
And every man that herd the bell for her ſowne
Bemony'd her ſtill ſore; ſaff Beryn toke none hede,
But ſought anothir feleſhip, and quyklich to them yede,
To ſuch manner company as ſhuld nevir thryve,
For ſuch he lovid bettir then his modir's lyve;
And evirmore it ſhuld be nyght or he wold home drawe,
For of his fadir in certeyn he had no manner awe;
For evir in his yowith he had al his wyll,
And was ypaſſed chaſtiſing but men wold hym kyll.
Fawnus for Agea, as it was well ſitting,
Made grete ordenaunce for hir burying,
Of prelatis and of preeſtis, and of all othir thyng,
As thoughe ſhe had be a wyff of a worthy king
It myght nat have be mendit; ſuch was his gentilnes,
For at hir enteryng was many a worthy meſſe.
For four weeks full, or he did her intere,
She ley in lede wythyn his houſe; but Beryn cam not there,
Namelich into the place where his modir ley,
Ne onys wold he a *Pater noſter* for hir ſoule ſey:
His thought was all in unthryft, lechery, and dyſe,
And drawyng all to ſoly, for *Yowith is reckles,*
But ther it is refreyned and hath ſom manere eye:
And ther'fore methinkith that I may wele ſey
A man ypaſſid yowith, and is wythout lore,
May be wele ylikened to a tre wythout more,
That may nat bowe ne bere fruyte, but root and ever waſt:
Ryght ſo by yowith farith that no man liſt to chaſt.
This mowe we know verely by experience,
That *Yerd makith vertu and benevolence*
In childhode for to growe, as provith ymagynacioune:
A plant whils it is grene, or it have dominacioune,
A man may wyth his fyngers ply it wher hym lyſt,
And make ther'of a ſhakill, a with, or a twiſt;
But let the plant ſtond, and yeris ovirgrowe,
Men ſhull not wyth both his hondis unnethis make it bowe:
No more myght Fawnus make his ſone Beryn,
When he grew in age, to his lore enclyne;
For every day when Beryn roſe unwaſh he wold dyne,
And draw hym to his feleſhip as even as a lyne,
And then com home and ete, and ſoop, and ſclepe at nyght:
This was al his beſynes but yf that he did fight;
Wher'for his fadir's hert Fawnus gan for to blede,
That of his modir that ley at home he toke no more hede:
And ſo did all the pepill that dwellid in the town
Of Beryn's wildnes gon ſpeke and eke roun.
Fawnus oppon a dey, when Beryn cam at eve,
Was ſet oppon a purpoſe to make his ſone leve
All his ſhrewd taichis wyth goodnes if he myght,
And taught hym feir and ſoft, but Beryn toke it light,
And countid at litill pryſe al his fadir's tale.
Fawnus ſaw it wold nat; with colour wan and pale
He partid from his ſone, and wyth a ſorowfull hert.
I ne can write halfyndele how ſore he hid ſmert
The diſobeying of his ſone and his wyf's deth,
That, as the book tellith, he wiſhed that his breth
Had ybeen above the ſerkill celeſtyne,
So fervent was his ſorowe, his angir, and his pyne.
So, ſhortly to conclude, Agea was interid,
And Fawnus livid wyfles three yere were ywesid,
Wher'of ther was grete ſpeche for his high honour;
Tyll at laſt word cam onto the Emperour
That Fawnus was without wyfe, and feld was jocounde,
But mournyng for Agea that he was to ybound,

And lyvid as an hermyte, ſoule and deſtitute,
Wythout conſolacioune, penſyff oft and mute:
Wher'for Auguſtinus, of Rome the Emperour,
Was inwardlich ſory, and in grete dolour.
Wyth that the ſeven Sagis and Senatouris all
Were aſſemblid, to diſcryve what ſhuld ther'of fall;
The wych ſeyd ſhortly, For a moleſtatioune
Ther was noon othir remedy but a conſolacioune;
For Whoſo wer in eny thing diſpleſid or agrevid
Muſt by a like thing egall be remevid.
And when the Emperour knew all their determinacioune,
Quicklich in his mynd he had imaginacioune
That Fawnus for Agea was in high diſtres,
And muſt ycurid be wyth paſſyng gentilnes
Of ſom luſty lady, that of pulchritude
Were excellent al othir: ſo, ſhortly to conclude,
The Emperour had a love tofore he had a wyf
That he lovid as hertlich as his own lyf,
As was as feir a creature as ſone myght beſhyne;
So excellent of bewte that ſhe mygnt be ſhryne
To all othir wymmen that wer tho lyvand:
But for the Emperour had a wyf ye ſhul wele onderſtond
He cam nat in hir company to have his delite;
For Criſtendome and conſcience was tho more perfite
Then it is now adayis, yf I durſt tell:
But I wol leve at this tyme. Than Fawnus al ſo well
Was aftir ſent in heſt, of ſeknes to be curyd;
So what for drede and ellis they wer both enſuryd
In preſence of the Emperour, ſo Fawnus myght nat flee;
It was the Emperours wyll, it myght noon othir be.
So wythin a tyme Agea was forgete,
For Fawnus thought litill on that he hir behight:
For as the ſeven Sagis had afore declarid
It cam all to purpos; For Fawnus litil carid
For eny thing at all ſave his wyff to pleſe,
That Rame was yclepid: for reſt nethir eſe
Fawnus nevir had but of her preſence:
So was his hert on her yſet that he coud no defence,
Save evirmore be wyth hir, and ſtare on hir viſage,
That the moſt part of Room held it for dotage,
And had much marvell of his variaunce:
But *What is that Fortune cannat put in chance?*
For ther n'as man on lyve on woman more bedotid
Then Fawnus was in Rame, ne half ſo much yſotid.
Wyth that Rame had knowlech that Fawnus was yſmyt
Wyth the dart of Love: ye mowe ryght wele it wyt
That all that evir ſhe coud caſt or ythynck
Was all ageyn Berynus, for many a ſotill wrench
She thought and wrought day by day, as meny wemen doon,
Tyll they have of their deſire the full concluſioune:
For the more that Fawnus of Rame did made
The more dangerous was Rame and of chere fade,
And kept wele hir purpoſe undir covirture:
She was the las to blame; it grew of nature.
But though that Rame wrought ſo, God forbede that alle
Wer of that condicioune. Yet touch no man the gall,
It is my plein counſell, but doith as othir doith:
Take yeur part as it comith of roughe and eke of ſmoothe.
Yit noritur, wit and gentilnes, reſon and perfite mynde,
Doth all theſe worthy women to worch agenys kynde,
That thoughe they be agrevid they ſuffir and endure,
And paſſith ovir for the beſt, and folowith nothing nature.
But now to Rame's purpoſe, and what was hir deſire,
Shortly to conclude, to make debate and ire
Betwene the fadir and the ſone, as it was likely tho;
What for his condicioune, and what for love alſo
That Fawnus owt to his wyff, the rathir he muſt hir leve,
And grant for to mend, yf ought hir did greve.
Berinus evir wrought right as he did before,
And Rame made hym chere of love, ther myght no woman more,
And gaff hym gold and clothing evir as he did leſe,
Of the beſt that he coud ought wher in town cheſe,
And ſpeke full feir wyth hym, to make al thyng dede;
Yit wold ſhe have yete his hert wythout falt or brede:
She hid ſo hir felony, and ſpak ſo in covert,
That Beryn myght nat ſpy it but lite of Ram'ys hert.
So, ſhortly to pas ovir, it fill oppon a nyghte,
When Fawnus and his freſh wyf wer to bed ydight,
He toke hir in his armys and made hir hertly chere,
Ther myght no man betir make to his fere,
And ſeyd, Myn ertly joy, myn hertis full pleſaunce,
My wele, my woo, my paradiſe, my lyv'is ſuſtenaunce!
Why ne be ye mery, why be ye ſo dull,
Sith ye know I am yeur own right as yeur hert woll?
Now tell on love, myn own hert! yf ye eylith ought,
For and it be in my power anoon it ſhall be wrought.

Rame wyth that gan ſighe, and wyth a wepeing chere
Undid the bagg of trechery, and ſeide in this manere:
No mervell though myn hert be ſore and full of dele,
For when I to yew weddit was wrong went my whele.
But who may be ageyns hap and aventure?
Therfor as wele as I may myne I mut endure.
Wyth many ſharp wordis ſhe ſet his hert on feir
To purchaſe with hir practik that ſhe did deſire:
But hoolich all hir wordis I cannot wele reherſe,
Ne write ne endite how ſhe did perce
Through Fawny's hert and his ſcull alſo;
For more petouſe compleynt of ſorowe and of woo,
Made nevir woman, ne more petouſly,
Then Rame made to Fawnys: ſhe ſmote full bitterly
Into the veyn, and through his hert blood;
She bloderit ſo and wept, and was ſo high on mode,
That unneth ſhe myght ſpeke but othir while among
Wordis of diſcomfort, and hir hondis wrong;
For alas and woo the tyme that ſhe weddit was!
Was evir more the ſrefreit when ſhe myght have ſpaſe.
I am yweddit; ye, God woot beſt in what maner and how!
For yf it wer ſo fall I had a child by you,
Lord! how ſhuld he lyve, how ſhuld he com awey?
Sith Beryn is yeur firſt ſone, and heir aftir yeur day?
But yf that he had grace to ſcoole for to goo,
To have ſom maner conning that he myght truſt to,
For as it now ſtondeth it were the beſt rede,
For, ſo God me help, I had levir he wer dede
Than wer of ſuch condicioune or of ſuch lore
As Beryn yeur ſone is; it wer bett he wer unbore,
For he doith nat ellis ſave at hazard pley,
And comyth home al nakid ech othir dey;
For within this month that I have wyth yeu be
Fiftene ſithis, for verry grete pite
I have yclothid hym al new when he was to tore,
For evirmore he ſeyde the old were ylore.
Now and he wer my ſone I had levir he were yſod,
For and he pley ſo long half our lyvelode
Wold ſcarſly ſuffiſe hymſelf oon,
And n'ere yee wold be grevid, I ſwere be Seynt John
He ſhuld aftir this dey be clothid no more for me,
But he wold kepe them bettir and draw fro nycete.
Now gentill wyff, grāmcy of yeur wiſe tale,
I thynk wel the more that I ſey no fale;
For towchyng my grevaunce, that Beryn goith al nakid,
Treulich that grevaunce is ſomwhat aſclakid:
Let hym aloon, I prey yew, and I woll con yew thank,
For in ſuch loſery he hath loſt many a frank.
The devil hym ſpede that rech yf he be to tore,
And he uſe it hereaftir as he hath doon to fore.
Beryn aroſe a morowe, and cried wondir faſt,
And axid aftir clothis, but it was all in waſt;
Ther was no man tendant for hym in all the houſe;
The whele was ychaungit into anothir coure.
Fawnus herd his ſone wele how he began to cry,
And roſe up anoon and to hym did high,
And had forgete nothyng that Rame had yſeyde,
For he boillid ſo his hert he was nat well apayde.
He went into the chambir ther his ſone ley,
And ſet hym down in a chair, and thus he gan to ſey:
My gentil ſone Beryn, now ſeir I wol ye teche;
Rew oppon thy ſelf, and be thyne own leche.
Manhode is ycom now, n.; ne own dere ſone,
It is tyme thow be aweynyd of thyn old wone:
And thow art 20 wynters, and naught haſt of doctryne;
Yit woldiſt thow draw to perfite the worſhip wold be thyne,
To noritur and goodſhip, and al honeſt thing,
Ther myght com to myn hert no more glad tyding.
Leve now al thy foly and thy rebawdry,
As tablis and mervellis, and the hazardry,
And draw the to the company of honeſt men and good,
Els leve thow me as wele as Criſte died on the rode;
And for al menkynd his ghoſt pas lete,
Thow ſhalt for me heraftir ſtond on thyn own fete,
For I woll no longir ſuffir this aray
To clothe the al new eche othir dey.
Yf thow wolt draw the to wit, and rebawdry withdraw,
Of ſuch good as God have ſent yn part have ſhalt thow:
And if thow wolt nat, my ſone, do as I the tell,
Of me ſhalt thow naught have, truſt me right well.
Wenyſt thow wyth thy diſe-pleying hold myn honoure
Aftir my deth dey? Then Beryn gan to loure,
And ſeide, Is this a ſermon or a prechement?
Ye were nat wont herto; how is this ywent?
Sendith for ſome clothing that I wer ago;
My ſelawis lokith aftir me, I woot well they do ſo:
I woll nat leve my feleſhip ne my rekelagis,
Ne my diſe-pleying, for all yeur heretages:
Doith yeur beſt wyth them by yeur lyf day,
For when they fall to me I wol do as I may.
Benedicite! fadir, who hath enformyd you,
And ſet you into ire, to make me chere rowe?
But I know wele inough whens this counſaill cam;
Trewlich of yeur own wyfe, that evil dame:
Com oppon hir body that fals putaigne,
For trewlich, fadir, yee dote on hir, and ſo all men ſeyne.
Alas that evir a man ſhuld, that is of high counſaile,
Set all his wiſdom on his wyv's taile!
Yee lovith hir ſo much ſhe hath benome yeus wyt,
And I may curs the tyme that evir ye wer yknyt,

For now I am in certen I have a ſtepmodir :
They been ſhrewis, ſom ther been, but few, othir.
Vel Fikil Flaptail, ſuch oon as the ys,
For all my pleying at diſe yit do yee more amys :
Yee have yloſt yeur name, yeur worſhip, and yeur feith,
So dote ye on hir, and levith all ſhe ſayith.
Fawnus wyth the ſame word gaff the chayir a but,
And lepe out of the chambir, as who ſeyd Cut,
And ſwore in verrey woodnes be God omnipotent
That Beryn of his wordis ſhuld ſore repent.
Beryn ſet nought ther'of, with a proude hert
Anſwerd his fadir, and axid a new ſhert.
He gropid al about to have found oon,
As he was wont to fore, but ther was noon.
Then toke he ſuch wilokis as he fond ther,
And beheld hymſelf what man he wer ;
For when he was arayde then gan he firſte be wrothe,
For his womb lokid out and his rigg both.
He ſtert aftir his fadir, and he began to cry,
For ſeth myn array, for the villany
Ys as wele yeurs as it is myne.
Fawnus let him clatir and cry wel and fyne,
And paſſid forth ſtill and ſpak nat a word.
Then Beryn gan to think it was nat al bord
That his fadir ſeyde when he wyth hym was,
And gan to think all about, and therwyth ſeid Alaſs !
Now know I wele forſoth that my modir is dede ;
For tho gan he to glow firſt a ſory mann'yis hede.
Now kepe thy cut, Beryn, for thou ſhalt have a
Somwhat of the world to lern betir wit ; [fit
For and thow wiſt ſikerly what ys for to com
Thow woldiſt wiſh aftir thy deth full oft and ylone ;
For *Ther n'ys betying half ſo ſore wyth ſtaff nethir*
Ys man to be bete with his own yerd. [*ſwerd*
The pyry is yblowe, hop, Beryn, hop,
That ripe wol heraftir and on thyn hede drop :
Thou tokiſt noon hede whils it ſhoon hoot,
Ther for wynter the nyghith aſay by thy cote.
Beryn for ſhame to town durſt he nat go,
He toke his wey to churchward ; his frend was made his foo,
For angir, ſorowe, and ſhame, and hevynes, that he had,
Unneth he might ſpeke, but ſtode half as mad.
O alas ! quod Beryn, what wyt had I
That coud nat tofore this dey know ſikerly
That my modir dede was ? but now I know to fore,
And drede more that eche day hereaftir more and more
I ſhall know and fele that my modir is dede.
Alas ! I ſmote the meſſangere, and toke of hir noon hede :
Alas ! I am right pore ; alas ! that I am nakid :
Alas ! I ſclept to faſt, tyl ſorowe now hath me wakid :
Alas ! I hunger ſore ; alas ! for dole and peyn,
For eche man me ſeith hath me in diſdeyn.
This was all his mirth to the churchward
That of his modir Agea he toke ſo litill reward.
When Beryn was within the chirch then gan he wers fray :
As ſone as he ſaw the tomb where his modir lay
His colour gan to chaunge into a dedely hew :
Alas, gentill modir ! ſo kynd you wer and trew,
It is no mervell for thy deth though I ſore ſmert.
But therwythal the ſorowe ſo fervent ſmote his hert
That ſodenly he fil down ſtan dede in ſwowe :
That he had part of ſorowe methynkith that myght I avowe.
Beryn lay ſo long or he myght awake,
For al hys fyve wittis had clene hym forſake,
Wel myght he by hymſelf, when reſon ycom were,
Undirſtond that Fortune had a ſharp ſpere,
And eke grete power among high and lowe,
Som to avaunce and ſom to ovirthrowe.
So at laſt whan Beryn a litill wakid were
He trampelid faſt with his fete, and al to tere his [ere
And his viſage both, right as a wodeman,
With many a bitir tere that from his eyen ran,
And ſighid many a ſore ſigh, and had much hevynes,
And evirmore he curſid his grete unkyndnes
To foreyit his modir whils ſhe was alyve,
And lenyd to hir tombe opon his tore ſclyve,
And wiſhid a thowſand ſithis he had ybe hir by,
And beheld hir tombe with a petouſe eye.
Now, glorious God ! quod Beryn, that al thing madiſt of nought,
Heven and erth, man and beſte, ſith I am myſwrought
Of yewe I axe mercy, ſocour, and help, and grace,
For my myſdede and ſoly, unthryffe and treſpaſe :
Set my ſorowe and peyn ſomwhat in meſure
Fro diſpeir and myſcheff as I may endure.
Lord of all lordis ! though Fortune be my foo
Yit is thy myght above to turn hym to and fro.
Firſt my modirs lyfe Fortune hath me berevid,
And ſith my fadirs love, and nakid alſo me levid.
What may he do more ? Yis, take awey my lyfe ;
But for that wer myn eſe, and end of al ſtryfe,
Ther'for he doith me lyve for my wers I ſey,
That I ſhuld evirmore lyve and nevir for to dey.
Now leve I Beryn wyth hys modir tyl I com aye,
And wol return me to Rame, that of hir ſotilte
Bethoughte hir al aboute, when Beryn was agoon
That it ſhuld be wittid hir, wher'for ſhe anoon
In this wiſe ſeyd to Fawnus : Sir, what have ye do,
Althoughe I ſpeke a mery word, to ſuffir your ſone
Nakid into the town ? it was nat my counſaill. [go
What wol be ſeyd ther'of ? ſikir without faile,
For I am his ſtepmodir, that I am cauſe of alle
The violence, the wrath, the angir, and the gall,
That is betwene yew both, it wol be wit me ;
Wher'for I prey you hertly doith hym com hom aye.
Nay, by trowith, quod Fawnus, for me comyth he
Sithe he of my wordis ſo litil priſe ſet [nat yit ;
As litil ſhall I charge his eſtate alſo :
Sorowe have that rechith though he nakid go,
For every man knowith that he is nat wiſe ;
Wher'for may be ſuppoſid his pleying at diſe
Is cauſe of his aray, and nothing yee, my wyff,
Yes, iwis, quod Rame, the tale woll he ryff

Of me and of noon othir, I know right wel afyne;
Wher'for I prey you, gentil Sir, and for love myn,
That he wer yfet hom, and that in grete haſt,
And let aſay offt agein with feirnes hym to chaſte;
And ſend Beryn clothis and a new ſhert; [hert.
And made al wele in eche ſide, and kept cloſe her
Now ſith it is your wyll, quod Fawnus tho anoon,
That Beryn ſhall home com, for yeur ſake aloon
I woll be the meſſager to put your hert in eſe;
And els, ſo God me help, wer it nat yew to pleſe
The gras ſhuld grow on pament or I hym home bryng.
Yet nethirles forth he went, wyth too or thre riding,
From o ſtrete to anothir, enqueryng to and fro
Aftir Beryn in every plaſe wher he was wont to
Seching eviry halk howris two or thre, [go,
With hazardours, and othir ſuch, ther as he was wont to be,
And ſond hym not ther; but to chirche went echone,
And at dorr they ſtode a while and herd Beryn made his mone:
They herd all his compleynt, that petouſe was to here.
Fawnus into the chirch pryvelich gan pire,
But al ſo ſone as he beheld wher Agea lay
His terls ran down be his chekis, and thus he gan to ſey:
A, Agea! myn old love, and my new alſo!
Alas, that evir our hertis ſhuld depart atoo!
For in your graciouſe dayis of hert'is trobilnes
I had nevir knowlech, but of all gladnes;
Remembryng in his hert, and evir gan renewe
The goodnes betwene them both, and hir hert trewe,
And drew hym nex to Beryn with an hevy mode.
But as ſone as Beryn knew and ondirſtode
That it was his fadir, he wold no longir abide,
But anoon he voidit by the todir ſide,
And Fawnus hym encountrid, and ſeyd, We have the fought
Through the town, my gentil ſone, and ther'for void the nought.
Though I ſeyd a word or two, as me thought for the beſt
For thyne erudicioune, to drawe the onto lyfe honeſt,
Thou ſhuldiſt nat ſo fervently have take it to thyn hert:
But ſith I know my wordis doith the ſo ſore ſmert
Shall no mere hereaftir; and eche dey our diete
Shall be mery and ſolaſe, and this ſhall be forgete;
For wele I woot for thy modir that thou art to tore,
Alſo thou haſt grete ſorowe, but onys nedith, and no more:
And ther'for, ſone, on my bleſſing to put ſorowe away;
Drawe the nowe heraftir to honiſt myrth and pley.
Lo ther is clothing for yewe, and yeur hors ydight
With harneys all freſhe new; and if yee liſt be knyght
I ſhall yit or eve that bergeyn undirtake, [make;
That the Emperour for my love a knyght ſhall you
And what that evir ye nede anoon it ſhall be bought,
For whils that I have eny thing ye ſhall lak naught.
Graunt mercy! quod Beryn with an hevy chere,
Of yeur worſhipfull profir that ye have proferid me here:
But ordir of knyghthode to take is nat my liking:
And ſith yeur will is for to do ſomwhat my pleſing,
Ye have a wyfe ye love wele, and ſo tenderlich,
That and ſhe have children I know right ſikerlich
All that ſhe can devyſe both be nyght and dey
Shall be to make her childryn heirs of that ſhe may,
And eke ſowe ſedis of infelicite,
Wher'of wold growe devyſioune betwene yewe and me:
For yf ye ſpend on me yeur good, and thus riallich
Levith wele, in certen yeur wyfe woll ſikerlich
Eche dey for angir her tuſkis whet,
And to ſmyte with her tunge, your hert in wrath to ſet.
Toward me from dey to dey, but ye wold aply
Somwhat to hir purpoſe and aftir hir yew guy;
She wold wex ſo ovirtwart and of ſo lither tach,
And evir lour undir her hood a redy for to ſnache;
She wold be ſhorſyng of yeur lyfe, and that deſire I naught:
Wher'for to pleſe all about, my purpoſe and my thought
Is for to be a Marchaunte, and leve myn heritage,
And releſe it for evir, for ſhyppys fyve of ſtage
Full of marchaundiſe the beſt of all this londe:
And yf ye woll ſo, fadyr, quyk let make the bonde.
Fawnus was right well apayd that ilk word outſtert,
But yit he ſeyd to Beryn, I mervell in myn hert
Wher haddiſt thou this counſaille to leve thyne honour,
And lyve in grete aventure and in grete labour;
And rid ſo forth talkyng a ſoft eſy paſe
Homward to his plaſe ther that Rame was.
And as ſone as Fawnus was ylight adown,
And highid faſt to his wyfe, and with hir gan to rown,
And told hir all the purpoſe, and made Fawnus chere,
She did hym nat half ſo much the tyme ſhe was his fere.
She hullid hym, and mollid hym, and toke hym about the nekk,
And went low for the kite, and made manya bekk;
And ſeyd, Sir, by yeur ſpech now right well I here
That yf ye liſt ye mowe do thing that I moſt deſire;
And that is this, yeur heritage there yeu beſt likid
That ye myght gyve: and evir among the brunſh awey ſhe pikid
From hir clothis here and there, and ſighid therwithall.
Fawnus of his gentilnes by hir myddil ſmale
Hertlich hir bracyd, and ſeyd, I woll nat leve,
I ſuyr yew my trowith that onys or it be eve
That I ſhall do my devoir without feintiſe
For to pleſe your hert fullich in all wyſe.

Graunt mercy! myn own ſoverene, quod Rame tho mekely,
And made proteſtatioune that ſhe ſhuld ſikerly
All the dayis of hir lyfe be to hym as hende
As evir woman was to man, as ferforth as hir mynd
And wit hir wold ſerve, and made grete othe.
Fawnus bood no longir, but forth therwith he goith.
A! precious God in heven, Kyng of majeſte!
So plentivouſe this world is of iniquite!
Why is to yſuffrid that trowith is brought adown
Wyth trechery and falſhede in feld and the in town?
But now to Fawnus and his entent. When he his ſone met
He toke hym ſoft by the hond; his tung he gan to whet,
Sotilly to engyne him. Firſt he gan to preche,
Leve thy foly, my dere ſone, and do as I the teche:
Sith thou haſt wit and reſon, and art of mann'ys age,
What nedith the be Marchaunt and ſhall have heritage?
For and thy good wer yloſt the forowe wold be myne,
To tell the ſoth, right nigh peregall to thyne;
And yf that I were dede whils thow wer oute
Lond and rent, and all my good, have thou no doute,
It wold be plukkid from the; thy part weld be
And alſo ferthermore, I make oon beheeſt, [left:
That I trowe my moblis wol nat ſuffiſe
To charge fyve ſhippis ful of marchandiſe
But yf I leyd in mortgage my lond and eke my rent,
And that I leve be nat thy wyll ne thyn entent:
Yit nethirles yf thy hert be ſo inly ſet
For to be a Marchaunt, for nothing woll I let
That I n'yl do thy pleſaunce as ferforth as I mey
To go ryght nygh myn own eſtate, but levir I had nay.
Their wordis ne their dedis, ne matters them betwene,
I wol nat tary now ther'on my perehemen to ſpene:
But fynallich, to the end of their accordement,
Fawnus had ſo goon about, yturned and ywent,
That he had brought his ſone tofore the Empe-
To releſe his heritage and al his honour, [rour,
That he ſhuld have aftir his dey, for ſhippis fyve, and full
Yled of marchaundiſe of lynnen and of wool,
And of othir thingis that wer yuſid tho.
Engroſid was the covenaunt betwene them to
Yn preſence of the Emperour, in opyn and no rown,
Tofore the gretiſt Cenators and eldeſt of the town.
So when the releſe ſelid was with a ſyde bonde
They wer yleyd both in a meen honde
Into the tyme that Beryn ſullich ſeſid were
In the ſyve ſhippis that I yew told ere.
But who was glad but Fawnus? and to his wyff went
And ſeyd, Now, my hert'is ſwete! all thyn hole entent
Ys uttirlich perfourmyd; us lakkith now no more
But marchaundiſe and ſhippis, as I told tofore.
That ſhall not faill, quod Rame, and began to daunce,
And aftirward they ſpeken of the purveaunce.
Alas! this fals world, ſo ful of trechery?
In whom ſhuld the ſone have truſt and faith ſikirly
If his fadir faylid hym? whether myght he go
For to fynd a ſikir frend that he myght truſt to!
So when theſe five ſhippis wer rayid and dight
Fawnus and his ſone to the Emperour ful right
They went, and many a grete man for the ſame caſe,
To ſee both in poſſeſſioune, as ther covenaunte
Beryn firſt was ſeſid in the ſhippis fyve, [was,
And Fawnus had the releſe, and bare it to his wyff;
And eche held them payde, and Rame beſt of all,
For ſhe had conquerid thing that cauſid moſt hir gall.
Now leve I Fawnys and his wyff, and of the governaunce
Of Beryn I wol ſpeke, and alſo of his chaunce.
When lodiſmen and maryneris in al thing redy was
This Beryn into Aliſaunder, yf God wold ſend hym grace
That wynde hym wold ſerve, he wold: ſo on a day
The wynd was good, and they ſeylid on ther wey
Too dayis fullich, and a nyght therwythal,
And had wedir at wyll, tyll at laſt gan fall
Such a nyſt among them that no man myght ſe othir,
That wele was hym that had ther the bleſſing of his modir.
For thre dayis inceſſantly the derknes among them was,
That no ſhipp myght ſe othir; wherfor full oft Alas!
They ſeyd, and to the high God they made their preycre,
That he wold of his grace them govern and ſtere
So that their lyvis myght ſavid be,
For they were cleen in diſpeyr, becauſe they myght nat ſe
The loder, wherby theſe ſhipmen ther cours toke ech one.
So at laſt, the ferth day, making thus hir mone,
The dey gan clere; and then ſuch wynd aroſe
That blew their ſhippis elſewhere then was their firſt purpoſe.
The tempeſt was ſo huge and ſo ſtrong alſo,
That wele was hym that coude bynde or ondo
Any rope within the ſhipp that longit to the craft;
Every man ſhewed his connyng to fore the ſhipp and baſt.
The wynd a wook the ſee to braſt, it blew ſo greſly fore,
That Beryn and all his company of fynnys las and more
Eche man round about ſhroff hymſelf to othir,
And put in Godd'is gowernaunce lyf, ſhipp, and ſtrothir;

For ther was ſhippis meyne, for owght they coud hale,
That myght abate of the ſhipp the thiknes of a ſcale:
The wedir was ſo fervent of wynd and eke of thundir
That every ſhipp from othir was blowe of ſight aſondir,
And durid ſo al day and nyght, tyll on the morowe
I trow it was no queſtioune wher they had joy or ſorowe.
So aftirward, as God wold, the wynd was ſomwhat ſoft,
Beryne clepid a maryner, and bad hym ſty on loft,
And weyte aftir our four ſhippis aftir us doith dryve,
For it is but grace of God yf they be alyve.
A maryner anoon wyth that, right as Beryn bad,
Styed into the top caſtell, and brought hym tydings glad:
Sir, he ſeith, beth mery; yeur ſhippis comith echone
Saff and ſound ſailing, as ye ſhul ſe anoon;
And eke, Sir, ferthermore, lond alſo I ſigh,
Let draw our cors eſtward, thys tyde woll bryng us ny.
Bleſſed be God! quod Beryn, then wer our ſhippis com,
We have no nede to dout werr ne moleſtatioune,
For ther nys wythin our ſhippis no thyng of ſpoliatioune,
But al trew marchaundiſe; wherefor for lodiſman
Stere onys into the coſtis as well as thou can;
When our ſhippis be ycom, that we mowe pas in fere,
Lace on a bonnet or tweyn, that we mowe ſaile nere.
And when they wer the coſtis nygh was noon of them alle
That wiſt what lond it was: then Beryn gan to calle
Out of every ſhip anoon a maryner or tweyne
For to take counſeil, and thus he gan to ſeyne:
The frountis of this ilk town been wondir feir wythall,
Methinketh it is the beſt rede, what that evir befall,
That I my ſelf aloon walk into the towne,
And here and ſe both her and ther, upward and downe,
And enquere fullich of their governaunce.
What ſey ye Sirs? woll ye ſent to this ordenaunce?
All they accordit well therto and held it for the beſt, [reſt,
For thus yf it be profitabill we mowe abide and
And yf it be othirwiſe the rathir ſhall we go,
For aftir that the ſpede we woll work and do.
But nowe mowe ye her right a wondir thing;
In all the world wyde ſo fals of their lyvyng
Was no pepill undir ſone, ne none ſo diſſeyvabill,
As was the pepill of this town, ne more unſtabill,
And had a curſed uſage of ſotill ymaginacioune,
That yf ſo wer the ſhippis of any ſtraunge nacioune
Were com into the port, anoon they wold them hide
Within their own howſis, and no man go ne ryde
In no ſtrete of alle the town; aſcaunce that they wer ſewde,
And coud no ſkill of marchandiſe, a ſkill it was a ſhrewde,
As ye ſhull here aftir of their wrong and falſhede;
But yit it ſill, asworthy was, oppon their own hede.
Beryn arayd hym freſhly, as to a Marchand longith,
And ſet hym on a palfrey wel be ſey and hongit,
And a page rennyng by his hors ſete:
He rode endlong the town, but no man coud he meet;
The dorrys wer ycloſid in both too ſidis,
Wherof he had mervell: yet ferthermore he ridis,
And waytid on his right hond a mancipil'is plaſe
All freſh and new, and thidir gan he paſe:
The gatis wer wyde up, and thidir gan he go,
For throughout the long town he found ſo no mo.
Therin dwellid a burgeyſe the moſt ſcliper man
Of all the town throughout, and what ſo he was
With trechery and gile, as doith ſom freris,
Right ſo muſt he part with his comperis.
Beryn light down on his hors, and inward gan he dres,
And fond the good man of the houſe pleying at cheſs
With hys neyghbour, as trewe as he, that dwellid hym faſt by.
But as ſone as this burgeyſe on Beryn caſt his eye
Sodenly he ſtert up, and put the cheſs hym fro,
And toke Beryn by the hond, and ſeyd theſe wordis tho;
Benedicite; what manere wynd hath ybrought you here?
Now wold to God I had wherof, or coud make yew chere!
But ye ſhull lowe my good wyll, and take ſuch as ther is,
And of yeur gentil paciens ſuffir that is amys.
For well he wiſt by his aray and by his countenaunce
That of the ſhippis that wer ycom he had ſom governaunce,
Wherfor he made hym chere ſemyng amaybill,
Icolerid all with cautelis, and wondir diſſeyvabill:
He bracyd hym by the myddil, and preyd hym ſit adoun,
And lowly with much worſhipp dreſſid his coſhon.
Lord God! ſeyd this burgeyſe, I thank this ilk dey
That I ſhuld ſee yew hole and ſound here in my contray;
And yf ye liſt to tell the cauſe of yewr comyng,
And yf ye have nede to any manere thing,
And it be in my power, and thoughe I ſhuld it ſech,
It ſhuld go right wonder ſtreyte, I ſey yew ſiker.
But yee it had in haſte, therwith yew pleſe, [lich,
For now I ſee yew in my houſe my hert is in grete eſe.
The todir burgeyſe roſe hym up for to make rouſe,
And axid of his ſelaw, that lord was of the houſe,
Whens is this worſhipfull man? with wordis hend and low,
For it ſemith by the manere that ye hym ſhuld knowe,

And have ſey hym tofore this tyme. I have ſene, quod the todir,
Ye ywis an 100 ſithis, and right as to my brodir
I wol do hym pleſaunce in al that evir I can,
For trewlich in his contray he is a worſhipful man:
Forſoth, Sir, and for your love, a thouſand in this town.
Wold do hym worſhip, and be right feyne and bown
To pleſe hym, and avail to have thonk of you:
I woot wele, God them yeld, ſo have they oft er nowe.
And aroſe up therwithall, and with his felaw ſpak
Of ſuch manere mater that faylid nevir of lakk.
So when their conſeill was ydo this burgeyſe preyd his fere
To ſit a down be Beryn, and do hym ſport and chere,
And in the while I wol ſe to his hors,
For every gentil hert, afore his own cors
Deſirith that his riding beſt ſervid and ydight
Rather than hymſelf; wherfor wyth all my myght
I woll have an eye therto; and ſich parte wyyn
Wich tonne or pipe is beſt and moſt fyne.
Beryn was all abaſhid of his ſoden chere,
But nethirles the burgeyſe ſat hym ſomwhat nere,
And preyd hym of his gentilnes his name for to tell,
His contrey and his lynnage: and he anſwer'd ſnell,
Berinus I am ynamid, and in Rome ybore,
And have fyve ſhippis of myn own, las and more,
Full of marchaundiſe, ligging tofore the town;
But much marvaille have I the good man is ſo boun
To ſerve me and pleſe, and how it might be.
Sir, ſeyd the burgeyſe, no mervelle it is to me,
For many a tyme and oft, I cannot ſey how lome,
He hath be in your marchis; and as I trow in Room
Alſo he was ybore, yf I ne ly ſhall.
Yf it be ſo, quod Beryn, no mervelle it is at all
Thoughe he may have yſey, and eke his gentill chere
Previth it all opynly; but be hym that bought me dere
I have ther'of no knowlech, as I am now avyſid.
With that cam in the good man with countenaunce diſgiſid,
And had enqueryd of the child that with Beryn cam
Fro gyanyng to the endyng, and told his maſtris name,
And of Agea his modir, and all thing as it was,
Wher-through he was ful perfite to anſwere to every cas;
So entryng into the hall the burgeys ſpak anoon,
A! my gentill Beryn, alas! that under ſtonne
Myn own hert Agea, thy modir leff and dere!
Now God aſſoyl hir ſoule, for nevir bettir chere
Had I of frend woman, ne nevir half ſo good.
Benedicite! a Marchaunt comyng ovir flood!
Who brought yew in this purpos, and beth your fadir's heir?
Now by my trew conſcience ryght nygh in diſpeyr
I wax for your ſake, for now frendleſe
Ye mowe wele ſey that ye been; but yit for nethirles
Yee mut endure fortune and hevynes put awey;
Ther is noon othir wiſdom. Alſo yeur ſhippis gey,
That been ycom in ſavete, ought to amend yeur mode,
The wich when we have dyned, I ſwere for by the rood,
We wol ſe them trewly within and eke without,
And have wyne wyth us and drynk al about.
They ſet and wiſh, and fed them, and had wherof plente;
The burgeyſe was a ſtuffid man, ther lakkid noon deynte.
So when they had ydined the cloth was up ytake,
A cheſe ther was ybrought forth, but tho gan ſorowe to wake.
The ches was all of ivory, the meyne freſh and new,
I pulſhid and ypikid of white, afure, and blew.
Beryn beheld the cheker, it ſemed paſſyng feir;
Sir, quod the burgeyſe, ye ſhul fynd her a payr
That woll mate yew trewly in las than half a myle,
And was yſeyd of ſotilte Beryn to begile.
Now in ſoth, quod Beryn, it myght wel hap nay,
And ne'er I muſt my ſhippis ſe els I wold aſſay.
What nedith that, quod the burgeyſe? trewlich I wol nat gloſe,
They been nat yit yſetelid ne fixid in the woſe;
For I have ſent thries ſith ye hither cam
To wait oppon their governaunce; wher'for let ſet o game,
And I ſhall be the firſt that ſhall yew ataſt.
The meyne wer yſet up, and gon to pley faſt.
Beryn wan the firſt, the ſecond, and the third,
And at fourth game' in the ches amyd
The burgeyſe was ymatid; but that luſt him wele;
And all was doon to bryng hym yn, as ye ſhul her ſnel.
Sir, then, ſeyd Beryn, ye woot well how it is,
Me liſt no more to pley, for yee know this,
Wher is noon comparifoun, of what thing ſo it be,
Luſt and liking fallith ther: as it ſemeth me
Ne myrth is nat commendabill that ay is by o fide,
But it rebound to the tothir; wherfore tyme is to ryde;
And as many thonkis as I can or may
Of my ſport and chere, and alſo of yeur pley.
Nay iwis, gentill Beryn, I woot ye wol nat go,
For noritur wol it nat for to part ſo,
And eke my condicioune; but I ley ſomething
Is no more to pley then who ſo ſhoke a ryng
Ther no man is wythyn the ryngyng to anſwere;
To ſhete a ſethirles bolt almoſt as good me were:
But and ye wold this next game ſom manir wager legg,
And let the trowith on both ſidis be morgage and yplegg,
That whoſo be ymatid graunt and aſſent
To do the todirs bidding, and whoſo do repent
Drynk all the watir that ſalt is of the ſee.
Beryn belevid that he coud pley betir than he,
And ſodinly aſſentid, with hond in hond aſſurid.
Men that ſtode beſides, ycappid and yhurid.
Wiſt wele that Beryn ſhuld have the wers mes,
For the burgeyſe was the beſt pleyer at ches
Of all the wyde marchis, or many a myle about;
But that ne wyſt Beryn of, ne caſt ther'of no doute:

He ſet the meyne eſſt ageyn, and toke betir hede
Then he did tofore; and ſo he had nede.
The burgeyſe toke aviſement long on every draught,
So wyth an hour or two Beryn he had ycaught
Somwhat oppon the hipp, that Beryn had the wers.
And albeit his mynd and wyll was for to curs,
Yit muſt he dure his fortune when he was ſo fer ygo;
For *Who is that that Fortune may alway undo!*
And namelich ſtout even in eche ſide
Of *pro* and *contra:* but God help down woll he glide.
But now a word of philoſophy that fallith to my mynd;
Who take hede of the begynnyng what ſal ſhall of the end
He leyth abuſh tofore the gap ther Fortune wold in ryde:
But comynlich yowith forgetith that throughout the world wyde.
Right ſo be Beryn I may wele ſey that conſaillis in rakid,
Likly to leſe his marchaundiſe, and go hymſelf al nakid.
Beryn ſtudied in the ches, although it nought availid;
The burgeyſe in the mene while with other men conſaillid
To ſech the ſergauntis in the town for thing he had ado.
So when they come were, they walkid to and fro
Up and down in the hall, as ſkaunce they knew nought;
And yit of all the purpoſe, wit, and mynd, and thought,
Of the untrew burgeyſe, by his meſſengeris
They wer ful enformyd: wherfor with eye, and eris, and heſt,
They lay await full doggidly Beryn to areſt,
Forther'for they wer aftir ſent, and was their charge.
Lord! how ſhuld o ſely lomb among wolvis weld,
And ſcape unyharmyd? it hath been ſeyn ſeld.
Kepe thy cut now, Beryn, for thow art in the caſe.
The hall was full of pepill, the ſerjauntis ſhewid their maſe;
Beryn kaſt up his hede, and was ful ſore amayid,
For then he was in certen the burgeyſe had hym betrayde.
Draw on, ſeyd the burgeyſe; Beryn, ye have the wers;
And every man to othir the covenaunt gan reherſe.
The burgeys, whils that Beryn was in hevy thought,
The next draught aftir he toke a rook for nought.
Beryn ſwet for angir, and was in hevy plight,
And drede full ſore in hert; for wele he wiſt al quyt
He ſhuld nat eſcape, and was in high diſtreſs;
And pryvelich in his hert that ever he ſaw the ches
He curſid the day and tyme: but what avaylid
For wele he wiſt then that he ſhuld be mate: [that?
He gan to chaunge his colour both pale and wan.
The burgeyſe ſeith; Comyth nere, ye ſhul ſe this man
How he ſhul be matid with what man me liſt
He droughe and ſeyd, Chek mate. The ſerjauntis wer full preſt,
And ſeſid Beryn by the ſcleve, and ſeyd, Sirs, what think ye for, to do, [ſo?
Quod Beryn to the ſerjauntis, that ye me hondith
Or what have I offendit? or what have I ſeide?
Trewlich, quod the ſerjauntis, it vaylith nat to breyde;
Wyth us ye muſt a while wher ye wol or no
Tofore the ſteward of this town; aryſe, and trus and go;
And ther it ſhal be openyd how wiſely thow haſt wrought:
This is the end of our tale, make it nevir ſo tought.
Sirs, farith feir, ye have no nede to hale. [tale.
Pas forth, quod the ſerjauntis, we wol nat her thy
Yis, Sirs, of yeur curteſy I prey yew of o word:
Although my gentill hooſt hath pleyed with me in borde,
And ywon a wager, ye have naught to doon:
That is between hym and me; ye have nothyng to doon.
The hooſt made an hidouſe cry, in geſolreut the haut,
And ſet his hand in kenebowe, he lakkid nevir a ſaute.
Weynſt thow, ſeid he to Beryn, for to ſcorne me?
What evir thow ſpeke, or ſtroute, certes it woll nat be.
Of me ſhalt thou have no wrong: pas forth a betir paſe;
In preſence of our ſteward I woll tell my caſe.
Why, hooſt, ſay yee this in erneſt or in game?
Ye know my contray, and my modir, my lynnage, and my name;
And thus ye have yſeyd me X ſith on this dey.
Ye, what though I ſeyd ſo? I know wele it is nay:
Ther lyth no more ther'to. But anothir tyme
Leve me ſo much the les when thow comeſt by me;
For all that evir I ſeyd was to bryng the in care,
And now I have my purpoſe I woll nothyng the ſpare.
Thus jangling to ech othir, endenting every paſe,
They entrid both into the hall ther the ſteward was:
Evandir was his name, that ſotill was, and ſo fell,
He muſt be well aviſed tofore hym ſhuld tell.
Anothir burgeyſe wyth hym was, provoſt of the cete,
That Hanybald was yclepid, but of ſotilte
He paſſid many anothir, as ye ſhul here ſone.
Berynus hooſt gan to tell al thyng as it was doon
Fro gynnyng to the endyng, the wordis wyth the dede,
And how they made their covenaunt, and wager how they leyd.
Now Beryn, quod the ſteward, thou haſt yherd this tale,
How and in what manere thou art ybrought in bale;
Thow muſt do his byddyng, thow maiſt yn no wyſe flee,
Or drynk all the watir that ſalt is in the ſee:
Of theſe too thingis thow muſt cheſe the toon;
Now be well avyſid, and ſey they will anoon.
To do yee both law I may no betir ſey, [mey:
For thow ſhalt have no wrong, as ferforth as I

Cheſe the ſelf right as the liſt, and wit thou nothing me
Though thow cheſe the wers and let the betir be.
Beryn ſtode aſtonyd, and no mervaill was, [caſe;
And preyd the ſteward of a dey to anſwere to the
For I might lightlich in ſom word be ycaught,
And eke it is right herd to cheſe of to that beth right naught:
But and it wer yeur likyng to graunt me day tyl to morowe
I wold anſwer through Godd'is help. Then muſt thow fynd a borowe,
Seyd the ſteward to Beryn, and yit it is of grace.
Now herith me, quod Hanybald, I prey a litil ſpaſe:
He hath five ſhippis ondir the town, lyggyng on the ſtrong,
The wich been ſufficiant yſeſid in our hond,
By me that am yeur provoſt to execute the law.
He muſt aſſent. Quod Evander, Let us onys here his ſaw.
I graunt wele, quod Beryn, ſith it may be noon othir.
Then Hanybald aroſe hym up to ſeſe both ſhip and ſtrothir, [wey,
And toke Beryn wyth hym: ſo talkyng on the
Beryn, quod Hanybald, I ſuyr the be my fey
That thow art much ybound to me this ilk dey,
So is thy ple amendit by me; and eke of ſuch a wey
I am avyſid in thy cauſe, yf thow wolt do by rede,
That lite or nought by my counſaill ought the to drede.
Yee know wele to morowe the dey of ple is ſet
That ye mut nedis anſwere, or els wythout lett
I muſt yeld them yeur ſhippis; I may in no wyſe blyn;
So have I undertake: but the merchaundiſe wythin
Is nat in my charge, ye knowe as wele as I,
To make ther'of no lywery: wher'for now wyſely
Werch, and do aſtir rede: let all your merchaun-
Be voidit of yeur ſhippis, and at hieſt priſe [diſe
I wol have it every dele in covenaunt; yf ye liſt
To ſe myne houſe here onys tofore, I hold it for the beſt,
Wher ye ſhull ſe of divers londis, houſes to or thre
Full of marchaundiſe, that through this grete cete
Is no ſuch in preve, I may right well avowe.
So when he have all ſeyn, and I have yeur alſo,
Let ſom bargen be ymade betwene us both too.
Graunt mercy! Sir, quod Beryn, yeur profir is feir and good;
Feyn wold I do ther'aſtir yf I ondirſtood
I myght wythout blame of breking of areſt.
Yis, quod Hanybald, at my perell me truſt.
So to Hanybald's houſe togidir both they rode,
And fond, as Hanybald had yſeyd, an houge houſe, long and brode,
Full of marchaundiſe as rich as it may be, [cete.
Paſſyng all the marchantis that dwellid in that
Thus when all was ſhewid they dronk and toke their leve,
So ſe Beryn's ſhippis in haſt they gon to meve.
And when that Hanybald was avyſid what charge the ſhippis bere [nere
He gan to ſpeke, in his wyſe aſcaunce, he rought
Whethir he bargenynd or no, and ſeyd thus: Beryn, frend,
Your marchaundiſe is feir and good, now let us make an end
If yee liſt; I can no more; ye knowith how it is.
Com, of ſhort let tuk them yn, methinkith I ſey nat mys,
And then yeur meyne and ye, and I, to my houſe ſhall we go,
And of the marchaundiſe I ſaw I wol not part
Cheſe of the beſt of that ye find there [therfro;
Throughout the long houſe, ther ſhal no man yeu dere,
And therwith ſhall yeur ſhippis be filled all fyve:
I can ſey no betir: yf ye liſt to dryve [men;
This bargen, to the end counſellith with yeur
I may nat long tary, I muſt nedis hen.
Beryn clepid his meyne counſell for to take;
But his firſt mocioune was of the woo and wrake,
And all the tribulacioune, for pleying at ches,
That he had, every dele his ſhame and his dures
Fro poynt to poynt, and how it ſtode, he told how it was,
And then he axid counſaill what beſt was in the caſe,
To chaunge with the burgeyſe or els for to leve?
Eche man ſeyd his avyſe; but al that they did meve
It wer to long a tale for to tell it here;
But ſynally, at end, they cordit al in fere
That the chaunge ſhuld ſtond, for as the caſe was fall
They held it clerely for the beſt, and went forth wythall
The next wey that they couth to Hanybald'is plaſe.
But now ſhull ye here the moſt ſotill fallace
That ever man wrought till othir, and higheſt trechery,
Wich Hanybald had wrought hymſelf to this company.
Go in, quod Hanybald, and cheſe, as thy covenaunt is.
In goon theſe Romeyns ech oon, and fond a mys;
For there was nothing that eny man might ſe
Saff the wall and tyle ſtonys, and tymbir made of tre;
For Hanybald had do void it of all thing that was there;
Whils he was at the ſhippis his men away it bere.
When Beryn ſaw the houſe ler that ful was ther'tofore
Of riche marchaundiſe, alas! thought he, I am lore,
I am in this world; and wittith well his hert
Was nat al in likeing; and outward gan he ſtert
Like half a wodeman, and bete both his lippis,
And gan to haſt faſt towards his own ſhippis,
To kepe his good within wyth al that evir he myght,
That it were nat diſchargit, as hym thought verrey right.
But al for naught was his haſt, for 30e men,
As faſt as they myght, they bare the good then,
Through ordenaunce of Hanybald, that pryvelich tofore
Had purpoſid and ycaſt ſhuld be out ybore.

Beryn made a ſwyff paſe; ther myght no man hym let;
But Hanybald was ware inough, and with Beryn met:
All for nought: Beryn, thou knoweſt well and fyne
The ſhippis ben areiſtid, and the good is myne.
What woldeſt thow do ther? thow haſt ther nowght to do;
I wol hold thy covenaunt and thow myn alſo.
For yit ſaw I nevir man that was of thy manere;
Sometyme thou wilt avaunte, and ſome tyme arere:
Now thow wilt, and now thow n'olt. Wher ſhul men the fynd?
Now ſey oon, and ſith anothir. So variant of mynd
Saw I nevir tofore this dey man ſo variabill.
Sith I the fynd in ſuch plyte, our bargen for to ſtabill,
We woll tofore the ſteward, ther we both ſhull have right.
Nay, forſoth, quod Beryn. Yis treulich the tite,
Quod Hanybald, wher thou wolt or no; and ſo I the charge
As provoſt: know that yf me liſt my warant is ſo large,
And thow make any diffence, to bynym thy lyffe.
Take thyn hors; it gaynyth nat for to make ſtryffe.
So wyth ſorowfull hert Beryn toke his hors,
And ſoftly ſeyd to his men, Of me, quod he, no fors,
But wend to yeur ſhippis; I wol com when I may;
Ye ſeth well everichone I may no bet awey.
Now here by this ſame Tale both fre and bond
Mow ſele in their wittis; and eke ondirſtonde
That *Litill vailith woyſdom or els governaunce*
Ther Fortune evir werrieth, and eke Hap and Chaunce,
Or what availeth bounte, bewte, or riches,
Frendſhip, or ſotilte, or els hardines,
Gold, good, or catell, wyt, or by lynage,
Lord, or lordis ſervice, or els high peerage?
What may all this avayle ther Fortune is a foe?
I wis right litill, or nevir a dele: full oft it fallith ſo.
So, ſhortly to pas ovir, they fill to ſuch an end
That Beryn ſhuld have day ageyn a morowe, and ſo to wend
He ſet hym in ful purpoſe to his ſhippis ward:
But yit or he cam ther he fond the paſſage hard:
For how he was begiled throughout all the towne
Ther and ther a coupill gan to ſpeke and to roune;
And every man his purpoſe was to have parte
With falſnes, and with ſotiltees; they coud noon othir art,
Beryn rode forth in his wey, his page ran hym by,
Full ſore adred in hert, and caſt about his eye
Up and down, even long the ſtrete, and for angir ſwet;
And er he had riden a ſtone's caſt, a blynd man with him met,
And ſpak no word, but ſeſid hym faſt by the lap,
And cried out and harrowe, and nere hym gan to ſtap.
All for nought, quod this blynd; what! wenyſt thow for to ſkape?
Beryn had thought to prik forth, and thought it had be jape.
The blynd man caſt awey his ſtaff, and ſet on both his hondis;
Nay, thow ſhalt nat void, quod he, for all thy rich londis,
Tyll I of the have reſon, lawe, and eke righte,
For trewlich I may wit it the that I have loſt my ſight.
So for ought that Beryn coud othir ſpeke or prey
He myght in no wyſe pas; ful ſore he gan to may,
And namelich for the pepill throng hym ſo about,
And eche man gan hym hond, and ſeyd, Without doute
Ye muſt nedes ſtond, and reſt, and bide the lawe,
Be ye nevir ſo grete a man. So wold I wonder fawe,
Quod Beryn, yf yee had cauſe, but I know noon.
No, thou ſhalt know or thow go thow haſt nat al ydoon,
The blynd man ſeyd to Beryn. Tell on them, quod he.
Here is no place to plete, the blynd man ſeyd age,
Alſo we have no juge here of autorite; [me.
But Evandir the ſteward ſhall deme both the and
When I my tale have told, and thow haſt made anſwere,
By that tyme men ſhull know how thow canſt the clere.
Now, ſoveren God! I thank the of this ilk dey;
Then I may preve the, be my lyve, of word and eke of ſay
Fals, and eke untrewe of covenaunt thow haſt ymakid.
But litill is thy charge now though that I go nakid
That ſometyme wer partinere, and rekenydſt nevir yit;
But thou ſhalt bere or we depart ther' of a litill witt,
For aftir comyn ſeyng, Evir atte ende [witt,
The trowith woll be previd how ſo men evir trend.
Thus they talkid to eche othir tyl they com into the plaſe,
And wer yentrid in the hall ther the ſteward was.
The blynd man firſt gan to ſpake: Sir Steward, for Godd'is ſake,
Herith me a litill while, for here I have ytake
He that hath do me wrong moſt of man of mold;
Be my help, as law woll, for hym that Judas ſold.
Ye know wele that oft tyme I have to yew ypleynid
How I was betrayed, and how I was ypenid,
And how a man ſome tyme and I our yen did chaunge:
This is the ſame perſone, though that he make it ſtraunge:
I toke them hym but for a tyme, and wenyd trewly
Myne to have that yhad ageyn; and ſo both he and I
Were enſured uttirlich, and was our both will;
But for myne the bettir were wrongfullich and ille
He hath them kept hidirto, wyth much ſorowe and pyne
To me, as ye wele knowith; becauſe I have nat myne
I may nat ſe with his; wherfor me is ful woo:
And evirmore yeſeyd that ye myght nothing do

Without presence of the man that wrought me this unquert:
Now sith he is tofore you now let hym nat astert;
For many tyme and oft yee behete me
And he myght be take he shuld do me gre.
Sith ye of hym be sesid, howevir so ye tave,
Let hym nevir pas tyl I myn yen have.
Beryn, quod Evandir, herist thow nat they selve
How sotilly he pletith, and ware by eche halve?
Beryn stode all muët, and no word he spake;
And that was tho his grace; ful sone he had be take
And he had mysseyd onys, or els yseyd nay;
For then he had been negatyff, and undo for ay:
For they were grete Sevilioun, and usid probat law,
Where evirmore affirmatyf shuld preve his own saw:
Wher'fore they were so querelouse of all myght com in mynd,
Though it wer nevir in dede ydo; such matere they wold synd
To benym a man his good through sommanir gile;
For the blynd man wist right wele he shuld have lost his whyle
To make his pleynt on Beryn, and suyd oppon his good,
For shippis and eke marchaundise in a balaunce stode;
Ther'for he made his chalenge his yen for to have,
Or els he shuld for them syne yf he wold them have,
And ligg for them in hostage tyil the synaunce cam:
This was all the sotilte of the blynd man.
Beryn stode all muët, and no word he spak.
Beryn, quod Evander, lest thow be ytake
In defaute of answere thou myghtist be condempnyd,
Be right wele avysid, sith thou art examenyd.
Sir, seyd Beryn, it wold litill availe
To answere thus aloon without good counsaill;
And also ferthermore, full litill I shuld be levid,
Whatevir I answered, thus stonyd and reprevid;
And eke my wit doith saille; and no wondir is;
Wher'for I wold prey yew, of yewr gentilnes,
To graunt me dey tyll to morowe I might be avyside
To answere forth, wyth othir that on me been surmysid.
Deperdeux! quod the steward, I graunt wel it be so.
Beryn toke his leve, and hopid to pas and go:
But as sone as Beryn was on his hors ryding
He met a woman and a child wyth sad chere comyng,
That toke hym by the reyn, and held hym wondir fast,
And seid, Sir, voidith nat yit, vailith nat to haste;
Ye mow in no wyse scape; ye must nedis abyde;
For though ye list to know me nat, yit lien by yeur side
I have ful many a tyme, I can nat tell yew lome.
Come tofore the steward, ther shall ye here yeur dome
Of thing that I shall put on yew, and no word for
To leve me thus aloon it is yeur villany. [to ly:
Alas the day and tyme that evir I was yeur make
Much have I endured this too yere for yeur sake!
But now it shall be know who is in the wronge.
Beryn was all abashid, the pepill so thik thronge;
About him in eche side: for ought that he couth peyn
He must to the steward of syne sors ageyn.
Now shull ye here how sotilich this woman gan hir tale
In presence of the steward. With colour wan and pale
Petously she gan to tell; and seid, Sir, to yew
Full oft I have compleynyd in what manere and how
My childlis fadir left me, by myself aloon,
Without help or comforte, as grete as I myght goon,
Wyth my son here and his, that shame it is to tell
The penury that I have yhad, that afors sell
I must nedis myne aray, wher me list or lothe,
Or els I must have beggit for to synd us bothe;
For there was nevir woman I leve, as I ges,
For lak of hede of lyvelode that lyvid in more distres
Then I my self for oft tyme for lake of mete and drink;
And yit I trow no creature was seyner for to swinke
My lyff to sustene: but as I mut nede
Above all othir thingis to his child take hede,
That wondir is and mervaile that I am alyve;
For the sokyng of his right as it were a knyve
It ran into my hert; so low I was of mode
That well I woot in certen with percell of my blode
His child I have ynorishid; and that is by me seen;
For my rede colour is turnid into grene:
And he that cause is of all here he stondith by me;
To pay for the sosteryng methinkith it is tyme.
And sith he is my husbond, and hath on me no rowith,
Let hym make amendis in saving of his trowith.
And yf he to any word onys can say nay
Lo! here my gage, al redy to preve all that I sey.
The stewarde toke the gage, and spak in soft wyse;
Of this perouse compleynt a mann'ys hert may grise,
For I know in percell hir tale is nat all lese,
For many a time and oft this woman that here is
Hath ybe tofore me, and pleynid of hir gresse,
But without a party hir cause myght nat presse.
Now thou art here present that she plenyth on,
Make thy defence now, Beryn, as wele as thow
Beryn stode all muët, and no word he spak. [con.
Beryn, quod the steward, doist thow sclepe or
Sey onys oon or othir: is it soth or nay. [wake?
As she hath declarid? tell on saunce delay.
Lord God! quod Beryn, what shuld it me availe
Among so many wise, without right good counsaill,
To tell eny tale? full litil as I ges:
Wher'for I wold prey you of your gentilnes
Graunt me day tyl to morrowe to answer forth with othir.
I graunt wele, quod the steward, but for fadir and modir,

Thow getiſt no lenger tyme pleynly I the tell.
Beryn toke his leve; his hert gan to ſwell
For pure verrey anguyſſh; and no mervaill was;
And who is that that n'old and he wer in ſuch caſe?
For al his triſt and hope in eny worldich thing
Was cleen from hym paſſid, ſave ſorowe and myſlykyng;
For body, good, and catell, and lyff, he ſet at nought,
So was his hert ywoundit for angir and for thought.
Beryn paſſyd ſoftly, and to his hors gan go;
And when he was without the gatis, he lokid to and fro,
And coud noon othir countenaunce; but to his page he ſeyd,
Precioufe God in heven! how falſly am I betrayd!
I trow no man alyve ſtont it wers plight,
And all is for my ſynne, and for my yong delite;
And pryncipally above all thyng for grete unkyndnes
That I did to my modir; for littil hede iwis
I toke of hir, this know I wele, while ſhe was alyve,
Therfor al this turment is ſent to me ſo ryve:
For ther was nevir womon kynder to hir child
Than ſhe was; and ther ageyns nevir thing ſo wyld
Ne ſo evil thewid as I was my ſelf,
Ther'for ſorowe and happs environ me by eche helve,
That I n'ote whider ryde nethir up ne down,
Ther ben ſo many devillis dwellyng in this town,
And ſo ful of gile and trechery alſo,
That well I woot in certeyn they woll me ondo.
Now wold to God in hevyn what is my beſt rede!
He toke his hors to his page, and thus to hym he ſayd,
Lede my hors to ſhipward, and take it to ſome man,
And aſſay yf I may in eny manere wiſe
Eſcape unarreſted more in ſuch manner wife.
The child toke his maiſtir's hors, and laft hym there aloon,
Walking forth on foot, making oft his moon;
And in his moſt muſing, I can nat fey how lome,
He woſſhid nakid as he was bore he had be in Room,
And no mervaill was it as the caſe ſtode,
For he drad more to leſe his eyen than he did his ſhippis or his good.
Now ye that liſtith to dwell and here of aventure,
How petouſly Dame Fortune, Beryn to inure,
Turnyth hir whele about in the wers ſide;
With hap of ſorowe and anguyſſh ſhe gynyth for to ride.
Beryn paſſid toward the ſtrond ther his ſhippis were,
But yee mow ondirſtond his hert was full of fere;
Yet nethirles he ſat hym down ſoftly on a ſtall,
Semy'ryſe for ſorowe, and lenyd to the wall
For turment that he had, ſo wery he wasand ſen t
And to God above thus he made his pleynt:
Glorious God in heven! that al thing maidſt of nought,
Why ſufferiſt thow theſe curſid men to ſtroy me for nought,

And knoweſt well myn innocent, that I have no gilt
Of al that they purſu me or on me is pik? [gilt
And in the meen whils that Beryn thus gan pleyn
A cachepoll ſtode beſidis, his name was Machaign,
And herd all the wordis, and knew alſo tofore
How Beryn was turmented both with las and more:
It was yſprong through the town; ſo was he full enſenſid
How he hym would engyne as he had propenſid,
And had araid hym ſotillich as man of contemplacioune,
In a mantell wyth the liſt, with fals diſſimulacioune.
And a ſtaff in his honde, as thoughe he febill were,
And drow hym toward Beryn, and ſeid in this manere:
The high God of heven, that al thing made of nought,
Bles yew, gentil Sir, for many an hevy thought
Me thinketh that ye have, and no wondir is:
But, good Sir, diſmay yew nat, but kvith yewr hevines,
And yf ye liſt to tell me ſomwhat of yeur diſtres
I hope to God Almighty in party it redres [oon,
Through my pore counſaill, and ſo I have many
For I have pete on yew be God and by Seint Jon:
And eke pryvy hevines doith eche man apeir
Sodenly or he be ware, and fall in diſpeir;
And who be in that plague that man is incurabill.
For conſequent comyth aftir ſekenes abominabill;
And ther'for, Sir, diſkeverith yewe, and be nothing adrad.
Graunt mercy! Sir, quod Beryn, ye ſeme trew and ſad;
But o thing lyith in myn hert, I n'ote to whom to truſt,
For tho that dyned me to dey ordeyned me to areſt,
A Sir! be yew that man? of yew I have yherd.
Gentill Sir, doutith nat, ne be nothing aferd
Of me, for I ſhall counſell yew as well as I can,
For trewlich in the cete dwellith many a fals man,
And uſyn litil els but falſhode, wrong, and wyle,
And how they might ſtraungers with trechery begile:
But ye ſhul do right wiſely ſomewhat be my counſail.
Speke with the ſteward; that may you moſt availl;
For ther is a comyn byword, yf ye it herd havith,
Wele fetith he his peny that the pound favith.
The ſteward is a covetouſe man, that long hath diſirid
A knyff I have in keeping, wherwith his hert I wirid;
Shall be yew to help, in covenaunte that yee
Shall give me five mark yeur treu frend to be.
The knyff is feir, I tell yew; yet nevir tofore this day
Myght the ſteward have it for aught he coud prey;
The wich ye ſhuld gyve hym, the betir for to ſpede,
And behothe hym 20 *l.* to help yew in your nede;

And yf he grauntith, truſtith wele ye ſtond in good plight;
For betir is then leſe all the las the more quyt.
And I woll go wyth yew ſtraight to his plaſe,
And knele down and ſpeke firſt to amend yewr caſe,
And ſay yee be my coſin; the betir ye ſhul ſpede;
And when that I have all ytold the knyff to hym yee bede.
Beryn thankid hym hertlich, andon hym gan truſt,
With hond in hond enſurid, and all for the beſt;
Beryn thought noon othir, al that it othir was.
Machaign hym comfortid, talkyng of their caſe,
And paſſid forth ſtylly toward the ſteward blyve
Beryn and Machaign; but Beryn bare the knyff,
And truſt much in his felawe to have ſom help:
But or they departed were they had no cauſe to yelp
Of no manir comfort, as ye ſhull here anoon;
For as ſone as Machaigne tofore the ſteward com
He fill plat to the erth: a grevous plynt and an huge
He made; and ſeyd, Sir Steward, now be a trew juge
Ageyns this fals treytour that ſtondith me beſyde;
Let take of hym good hede, els he woll nat abide.
Now mercy gode Steward, for yee have herd me yore
For my fadir Melan pleyn to you ful ſore,
That with ſeven dromedarys, as I have told yew lome,
With marchandiſe chargit went toward Rome,
And it is ſeven yere ago and a litill more
Of hym or of his goodis that I herd les or more;
And yet I have enquered as by ely as I couthe.
And met nevir man yit that me coud tell with mowth
Any tyding of hym onto this ſame day;
But now I know too much, alas! I may wel ſey.
When Beryn herd theſe wordis he kiſt down his hede;
Allas! he thought in hert, alas! what is my rede?
And would fayn have voidit and outward gan to ſtapp,
But Machaigne aroſe and ſeſid by the lapp:
Nay, thow ſhalt not void, he ſeid; my tale is nat ydo;
For be trowith of my body yf thou ſcapidiſt ſo
I ſhuld nevir have mery whils I wer on lyve,
And ſet hond faſt on Beryn's othir ſcleve,
And ſeid, Good Sir Steward, my tale to the end
I prey ye wold here, for wend how men wend
There may no man hele murdir, but it will out at laſt: [paſt
The ſame knyff my fadir bere when he of contre
Let ſerch wele this felon, ther ye ſhul hym find;
I know the knyff wele inough, it is nat out of my mynd:
The cotelere dwellith in this toun that made the ſame knyff,
And for to preve the trowith he ſhall be here as blyve.
Beryn ſwat for angir, his hert was full of fere;
He toke the knyff to the ſteward or he ſerchid were.
The ſteward onto Beryn, My frend, lo! quod he,
And thow think the well about this is foule plee:
I can know noon othir but thow muſt or thow go
Yeld the body of Melan and his good alſo.
Now be well avyſid ageyne to morowe day,
Then ſhalt thou have thy jugement; ther is no more to ſay.
When Beryn fro the ſteward thus departid was,
And was without the gate, he lokid oppon the plaſe,
And curſid it wondir bitterly in a fervent ire,
And wiſhid many tymes it had been a fire;
For I trowe that man of lyve was never wors betrayid
Then I am; and therwithall my hert is cleen diſmayid,
For here I have no frendſhip, but am all counſelles,
And they ben falaſher then Judas, and eke mercyles.
A, Lord God in hevyn! that my hert is woo;
And yit ſuyrly I mervel nat though that it be ſo,
For yit in all my lyve ſithe I ought undirſtond
Had I nevir wyl for to lern good:
Foly I hauntid it ever, ther myght no man me let,
And now he hath ypaid me, he is cleen out of my dett;
For whils I had tyme, wiſdom I myght have lernyd,
But I drow me to foly, and wold nat be governed,
But had al myne own wyll, and of no man aferd,
For I was nevir chaſtiſid; but now myne own yerd
Betith me to ſore; the ſtrokis been too hard;
For theſe devillis of this town takith but littil reward
To ſclee my body to have my good. The day is ſet to morowe;
Now wold to God I were in grave, for it wer end of ſorowe.
I was iwis to much a fole; for hate I had to Rame
I wold forſake myn heritage, ther'for ſorowe and ſhame
Is oppon me fall, and right wele deſervid,
For I toke none maner hede when my modir ſtervid,
And diſobeyid my fadir, and ſet hym at naught alſo;
What wondir is it than though that I have woo?
Fortune and eke Wiſdom have werrid with me evir,
And I with them in all my lyf, for Fortune was me levir.
Then eny wit or governaunce, for them too I did hate;
And though I wold be at oon now it is too late.
O myghtfull God in heven! wher was evir man
That wrought hymſelf more foly than I my ſelf did than?
A curſid be the tyme that I out of Rome went?
That was my fadir's right heir of lyvelode and of rent,
And al the rial lordſhip that he hath in the town.
Had I had wit and grace, and hold me low and boun,
It wer my kynd now among my baronage
To hauk and to hunt, and eke to pley and rage

With feir freſhe ladies, and daunce when me liſt;
But now it is to late to ſpeke of Had I wiſt.
But I fare like the man that for to ſwele his flyes
He ſtert into the bern, and aftir ſtre he hies,
And goith about the wallis with a brennyng wafe,
Tyll it was at laſt that the leem and blaſe
Entrid into the chynys where the wheate was,
And kiſſid ſo the eveſe that brent was all the plaſe;
But firſt in the begynnyng, tyll feer ſmote in the raftris,
He toke no manere kepe, and thought of nothing aftir
What perell there myght fall: ne more did I ywis,
That wold forſake myn honour for the unkyndnes
Of Rame, that was my ſtepmodir; for yf I ſhall nat ly
They beth foure; wherfore the more wiſely
I ſhuld have wrought, had I had wit, and ſuffrid for a tyme,
And aftir com to purpos wel inowghe of myne;
But evil avengit he is deol that for a litil mode
And angir to his neybour ſellith awey his good,
And goith hymſelf a beggyng: aftir in breff tyme
He mut be countid a lewd man in all manere ryme.
So have I wrought and wers, for I dout of my lyve,
How that it ſhal ſtond, for plukking of my ſcleve
The knyff that was me take, as ye have herd to-fore;
And yit it grevith mine hert alſo much more
Of myn own pepill, that no diſeſe aſervid.
I wote wele aftir pleding ryght nought woll be reſervyd
To ſuſtene their lyvis: I trow ryght nought or lite,
And peraventur lightly ſtond in wors plight.
Of me it is no fors though I be thus arayed,
But it is dole and pete that they ſhull be betrayid
That hath nought aſervid but for my gilt aloon.
And when that Beryn in this wiſe had ymade his mone
A crepill he ſaw comyng with grete ſpede and haſte
Oppon a ſtilt ondir his kne bound wondir faſt,
And a crouch undir his armys, with hondis al for-ſkramyd;
Alas! quod this Beryn, ſhall I be more examenyd?
And gan to turn aſide onto the fee ſtronde,
And the crippill aftir, and wan oppon hym londe.
Tho began Beryn to drede inwardlich ſore,
And thought thus in his hert, ſhall I be comberid more?
And it wer Godd'is wyll my ſorowe for to ceſe
Methinkith I have inowghe. The cripill began to preche,
And had yraught nere hond Beryn by the ſcleve:
Beryn turnyd as an hare, and gan to ren blyve;
But the cripill knew betir the pathis ſmale and grete
Then Beryn, ſo to fore hym he was, and gan hym mete.
When Beryn ſaw it vaylid naught to renne ne to lepe,
What for dole and anguyſſh no word myght he ſpeke,
But ſtode ſtill amaſid, and ſtarid faſt about:
The crepill began to ſpeke; Sir, to drede or to dout
Of me wold ye right light, and ye knew myne hert,
So where ye like well or ill fro me ſhall ye nat part
Tyl I have tretid with yew, and ye with me alſo,
Of all yeur ſoden happis, yeur myſcheff, and yeur wo;
For by the tyme that I have knowlech of yeur caſe,
Yeur rennyng, and yeur trotting into an eſy pas,
I ſhall turn or that we twyn, ſo ye aftir my ſtole
Woll do, and as I rede yew; for yee wer a fole
When ye cam firſt alonde, ye had met with me,
For I wold have enſenſid yew all the iniquite
Of thes fals marchauntes that dwellen in this town,
And outid all your chaffare without gruch or groun;
For had ye dwellid within yeur ſhippis, and nat go them among,
Then had ye been undaungerid, and quyt of all their wrong
On yew that been furmyſid through fals ſuggeſtioune.
Beryn gan to ſigh, unneth he might ſoune
Saf o word or tweyn, and Mercy was the firſt,
Preying with all his hert that he myght have his reſt,
And be no more enpledit, but pas fro hym quyte.
Good Sir, quod Beryn, doith me no more diſpite,
And ſuffir me to pas, and have on me routhe,
And I ſuyr yew feithfully, have here my trowith,
To morowe when I have plodit, and eny thing be laſt
Of ſhip or marchaundiſe, afore the ſhip or baft,
I woll ſhew yew all iſere, and opyn every cheſt,
And put it in yewr grace to do what ye leſt.
And in the meen while that Beryn gan to clapp
The crypill nyghid hym nere and nere, and hent hym by the lap;
And as ſone as Beryn knew that he was in honde
He unlacyd his mantell for drede of ſome command,
And pryvelich ovir his ſhuldris let hym down glide,
And had levir leſe his mantell then abide.
The crepill all perceyvid, and hent hym by the ſcleve
Of his nethir ſurcote. Alas! now mut I ſtrive,
Thought Beryn by himſelf, now I am yhent,
There helpith naught ſave ſtrengith; therwith the ſcleve to rent
Beryn gan; to ſcappe he ſparid for no coſt.
Alas! thought this cripill, this man woll be loſt,
And be o ido for evir, but he counſell have;
Iwis though he he be lewde my contremen to ſave:

Yit will I my beſines do and peyn that I may,
Sith he is of Room, for that is my contray.
This cripill was an hundrit yere full of age,
With a long thik berd, and a trew viſage
He had; and manly and july was he,
And Geffrey was his name yknow in that contre.
Alas! thought this Geffrey, this man hath grete drede
Of me, that by my power wold help hym in his nede:
I wis though he be nyce, untaught and unwiſe,
I woll not for his foly leve myne enpryſe;
And lept aftir Beryn, and that in right good ſpede.
Beryn was ſo ſore agaſt he toke no maner hede
To look onys bakward tyll he to the watir cam,
Then lokid he behynd and ſaw Sir Clekam
Commaund wondir faſt with ſtaff and with his ſtilt.
Allas! thought Beryn, I now am yſpilt,
For I may no ferthir without I wold me droune,
I n'ote wich were the betir, or go ageyn to toune.
Geffrey was ſo nigh com that Beryn myght nat fle:
Good Sir, quod this Geffrey, why do yee void me?
For by heven quene, that bare Criſt in hir barme,
But right as to my ſelf I woll yew no maner harme.
Sittith down here by me oppon this ſee ſtronde,
And yf ye drede any thing clepe yewr men to londe,
And let them be here with us all our ſpeche tyme,
For I woll not feyn oon word, as makers doon to ryme,
But counſell yew as prudently as God woll ſend me grace:
Take comfort to yew, and herk a litill ſpaſe.
And when that Beryn had yherd his tale to the end,
And how goodly as Geffrey ſpak, as he were his frende,
None obſtant his drede, yet part of ſapience
Stremyd into his hert for his eloquence,
And ſeyd; God me counſaill for his high mercy!
For I have herd this ſame dey men as ſotilly
Speke, and of yeur ſemblant, and in ſuch manere,
And byhete me frendſhip outward by their chere,
But inward it was contrary their intellectioune,
Wharfor the blame is les, though I ſuſpectioune
Have of yewr wordis, left othir be yewr entent,
For I n'ote whom to truſt by God omnipotent;
Yit nethirles yf your will is to com into the ſhip with me
I woll ſomwhat do by yeur rede how ſo it evir be.
Then, quod Geffrey, if it be ſo that I in yeur powere
Entir into your ſhippis, and yew help in yewr myſtere,
That ye ageyn yewr adverſaryes ſhull have the betir ſyde,
And gyve yow ſuch counſell to bate down their pride,
And that yee wynne in every pleynt, al ſo much or more
As they purpoſe to have of yew; yf they be down yboore,

And ye have amendis for their iniquite,
And I yew bring to this end, what ſhall my guerdon be?
In vertey ſoth, quod Beryn, yf I yew may truſt
I woll quyte yew trewly, I make yew beheſt.
In feith then, quod Geffrey, I woll with yew wende.
What is yewr name, ſeid Beryn, though my frende?
Gefferey, he ſeid; but in theſe marchis I was nat bore,
But I have dwellid in this cete yeeris heretofore
Ful many, and turmented wers then wer yee,
And endurid for my trowith much adverſite,
For I wold in no wiſe fulfil their falſhedes,
For in all the world ſo corrupt of their dedis
Been noon men alyve, I myght ryght well avow.
For they ſet all their wittis in wrong all that they mowe;
Wher'for full many a tyme the grettiſt of them and I
Have ſtonden in altercatioune for their trechery;
For I had in valew in trew marchaundiſe
A M. l. all have they take in ſuch maner wiſe:
So ferforth to ſave my blode no longer myght I dryve dure;
For drede of wors thus thought I myſelf to diſfigure,
And have among them 12 yere go right in this plighte,
And evir have had in memory how I myght them quyte;
And ſo I hope now, as ſotill as they be,
With my wit engine them and help yew and me.
My lymes been both hole and ſound, me nedith ſtilt ne crouch.
He caſt aſyde them both, and lepe oppon an huche
And adown ageynes, and walkid to and fro,
Up and down, within the ſhip, and ſhewid his houdis tho,
Stretching forth his fingris in ſight and all about
Without knot or knor, or eny ſign of goute,
And dyght them efft ageyns right diſtirly,
Som to ride ech othir, and ſom aweward wry.
Geffrey was right myghty, and wele his age did bere,
For natur was more ſubſtantiall when tho dayis wer
Then now in our tyme; for all thing doith waſte
Saff vile and curſid lyving, that growith all to faſte.
What ſhuld I tell more? But Geffrey ſat hym down,
And Beryn hym beſydis; the Romeyns gan to roun,
And mervelled much in Geffrey of his diſgiſenes,
And Beryn had anothir thought, and ſpak of his diſtres.
Now Geffrey, ſeid this Beryn, and I durſt truſt in yewe
That and ye knewe eny man that is alyve anowe
That had of diſcrecioune ſo much influence
To make my party good to improwe in my defence,

And delivir me of ſorowe, as ye behote have,
I wold become his legeman, as God my ſoule ſave.
That wer to much, quod Geſſerey; that woll I yew releſe;
But I deſire of othir thing to have yewr promes,
That and I bryng yewr enmyes into ſuch a traunce
To make ſor yewr wrong is to you right high fenaunce,
And ſo declare ſor you that with you pas ſuch dome,
That yee oppon your feith bryng me at Rome,
Yf God wol ſend yew wedir and grace to repaſe.
Quod Beryn, But I grant yew I wer lewder then an aſſe,
But or I fullich truſt yew holdith me excuſid;
I woll go counſell with my men leſt they it refuſid.
Beryn drew aſyde, and ſpak with his meyne,
And expreſſid every word in whas plight and degre
That he ſtode from poynt to poynt, and of his fals areſtis:
His meyne were aſtonyd, and ſtarid forth as beſtis.
Speikith ſom word, quod Beryn, ſith I am betrayd;
Yee have yherd what Geffrey to me hath ſayd.
Theſe Romeyns ſtode alle ſtill; o word ne cowd they meve;
And eke it paſſid their wittis. Then Beryn gan releve,
And to Geffrey eſt ageyn, and mercy hym beſought.
Help me, Sir, quod Beryn, for his love that us bought
Dying on the rood, and wept full tendirly;
For but ye help, quod Beryn, ther is no remedy,
For comfort nethir counſaill of my men have I noon:
Help me, as God yew help, and els I am undoon.
When Geffrey ſaw this Beryn ſo diſtract and wept,
Pite into eche veyn of his hert crept.
Allas! quod Geffrey, I might nat do a more ſynful dede,
I leve by my trowith, then ſayl yew in this nede;
Faill me God in heven yf that I yew faill!
That I ſhall do my beſines, my peyn, and my travaile,
To help yew be my power; I may no ferther goo.
Yis, yee behete me more, ſeid Beryn, tho,
That yee wold help me at all that I ſhuld ſtond
Beryn gan to wepe and make wers chere [cler.
Stillith yew, quod Geffrey, for how ſo evir ye
More than my power ye ought nat deſire, [tire
For thorough the grace of God ye ſhul be help wele;
I have ther'of no dout; but trewlich I you tele
That ye woll hold me covenaunte and I woll yew alſo,
To bryng me at Rome when it is all ydo.
In ſigne of trowith of both ſidis of our acordment
Eche of us kys othir of our comyn aſſent;
And all was do. And aftirward Beryn commaundit wyne;
They dronk, and then Geffrey ſeid; Sir Beryne,
Yee mut declare yeur maters to myne intelligence,
That I may the bet perſeyve all inconvenience,
Dout, pro, contra, and ambiguite,
Thorough your declaratioune, and enformyd be;
And with the help of our Soveren Lord celeſtiale
They ſhall be behynd, and we ſhull have the ball,
For now the time approchith for their curſidnes
To be ſomwhat rewardit; and cauſe of yewr diſtres
Hath my hert yſetlid and fixid them a nye,
As trowith woll and reſon, for their trechesy:
For many a man tofore this day they have do out of daw,
Diſtroid and turmentid thorough their fals law;
For they think litill ellis, and all their wyttis fyve,
Save to have a mann'ys good and to benym his lyve;
And hath a curſid cuſtom, all ageyns reſon,
That what man they empeche they have noon encheſon
Thoughe it be as falſe a thing as God hymſelf is trewe:
And it touche a ſtraunger that is com of newe
Atte firſt mocioune that he begynneth to meve
Ther ſtondith up an hundrit hym to reprewe.
The lawes of the cete ſtont in probacy;
They uſen noon enqueſtis the wrongis for to try:
And yf thow haddiſt eny wrong, and woldiſt pleyn the,
And were as trewe a cauſe as eny myght be,
Thow ſhuldiſt na: find o man to bere the witnes,
Though every man in the town knew it more or les;
So burith they togidir, and holdith with eche othir,
That as to counterplede them, though ye wer my brothir,
I wold gyve yew no counſaill, ne their empechement,
In no word to deny, for that wer combirment;
For then wer they in the affirmatyf, and wold preve anoon,
And to yew that wer negatyff the law wold graunt anoon:
So for to plede ageyn them it woll litill availl,
And yit to every mann'ys wit it ought be grete mervaile,
For their lawes been ſo ſtreyt, and peynous ordinaunce
Is ſtallid for their falſhede; for this is their ſynaunce,
To leſe their lyff for leſing, and Iſope it may knowe,
That lord is riall of the town, and holdith them ſo lowe,
Wherfor they have a cuſtom a ſhrewid for the nonys,
Yf eny of them ſey a thing they cry all at onys,
And ferm it for a ſoth, and it bere any charge;
Thus of the danger of Iſope they kepe them ever at large;
And therfor wiſdom weer, whoſo might eſchewe,
Nevir to dele with them; for wer it wrong or trewe
It ſhuld litill availl ageyns their falſhedes,
For they been acurſid, and ſo been their dedes;

Wherfore we muſt, with all our wit ſchſibilk,
Such anſwess us purvey that they been inſolibill,
To morowe at our aparaunce, and ſhall be reſponſaill,
For of wele and ellis it is thy day fynall.
Now Soveren Lord celeſtiale! with many ſorowful ſighs,
Seyd Beryn to Geffrey, ymmemorat of lyes,
Graunt me grace to morowe, ſo that God be pleſid
Make ſo myne anſwere, and I ſomwhat y-eſid
By the that art my counſaill, for othir help is noon.
Reherce me then, quod Geffrey, the cauſis of thy ſoon
Fro poynt to poynt, al in fere, on the is ſurmyſid,
Wherthorough I myght to morowe the betir be aviſid.
Now in ſoth, quod Beryn, thoughe I ſhuld dy
I cannat tell the tenyth part of their trechery,
What for ſorowe and angir that they to me have wrought;
So ſtond I clene deſperat but ye con help ought.
Deperdeux! ſeid Geffrey, and I the woll not faill,
Sith I have enſurid the to be of thy counſaill;
And ſo much the more that thou art nat wiſe,
And canſt nat me enform of no maner aviſe;
Here ther'fore a while, and tend wel to my lore.
The lord that dwellſth in this town, whoſe name I told tofore,
Iſope, eſt reherſid, is ſo inly wiſe
That no man alyve can his pas deviſe,
And is ſo grow in yeris that lx yeer ago
He ſawe nat for age; and yit it ſtondith ſo
That thorough his wit, and wiſdom, and his governaunce,
Who makith a fray ef, or ſtryvith aught, or mel to much or praunce,
Within the ſame cete, that he n'ys take anoon,
And hath his pennaunce forthwith, for pardon uſith he noon:
For ther n'ys pore ne riche, ne what ſtate he be,
That he ny's undirfote for his iniquite;
And it be previd on hym ther ſhall no gold hym quyte,
Right as the forfete axith moch or lite,
For geyns his commaundment is noon ſo hardy quek,
So hard ſetith he his fote in every mann's nek;
For undir ſky and ſterris this day is noon alyve
That coud amend hym in o poynt, al thing to diſtryve.
The ſeven Sages of Rome, though al ageyn hym were,
The ſhuld be inſufficient to make his anſwere,
For he can all langagis, Greek, Hebrew, and Latyne,
Caldey, Frenſh, and Lombard, ye know well fyne,
And al maner that men in bokis write;
In poyſe and philoſophie alſo he can endite:
Cevile and canoune, and al maner lawis,
Seneca and Sydrak, and Salamon'ys ſawys,
And the ſeven ſciences, and eke lawe of armys,
Experimentis and pomprey, and all maner charmys,
As ye ſhul here aftir er that I depart,
Of his imaginaciouns and of his ſotill art;
For he is of age 300 yere and more,
Wherfor of all ſciences he hath the more lore.
In Denmark he was gotten and ybore alſo,
And in Grece ynoriſhed tyl he coud ſpek and go;
Ther was he put to ſcole, and lernyd wondir faſt,
For ſuch was his grace that all othir he paſt:
But firſt in his begynnyng litil good he had,
But lernyd evir paſſyngly, and was wiſe and ſad:
Of ſtature and of feture ther was noon hym like
Thorough the lond of Grece though men wold hym ſeke.
A kyng ther was in tho yeris that had noon heir male
Saff a doughter, that he lovid as his own ſaa';
Iſope was his ſervaunt, and did hym ſuch pleſaunce
That he made hym his heir, and did hym ſo avaunce
To wed his doughter, and aftir hym to bere crowne,
Thorough prowes and his port ſo low he was and boun;
So as Fortune wold, that was Iſop'is frend,
This worthy king that ſame yere made his carnel end.
That twenty-ſeven yere is paſſid that Iſope thus hath reigned,
And yit was ther nevir for wrong on hym compleyned
For no jugement that he gaff; yit ſom ageyn hym wylid
A grete part of his pepil, and wold have hym exilid;
But his grete wiſdom, and his manfulnes,
His governaunce, with his bounte and his rightfulnes,
Hath evir yit preſerved hym unto this ilk day,
And woll whyle that he lyvith for aught that men can ſay:
For who hath eny quarrel or cauſe for to wonde
Within this ſame cete, quicklich woll he fond,
And it be ſotill matir, to Iſope for to fare,
For gynnyng to the end his quarrell to declare;
And eve afore, as cuſtom is, peple ſhall be on the morowe;
But whoſo ly he ſcapith nat wythout ſhame or ſorowe.
Beryn, thou muſt go thidir, wher thyn empechement
Shull be ymevid, and therfor pas nat thens
Tyll thou have herd them alle, and report them wele
To me, that am thy counſell, and repeir ſnele.
But ſo rial mancioune as Iſope dwellith in
Ther is noon in the world, ne ſo queynt of gyn,
Wherfore be well aviſid how I enform the
Of the wondir wayis and of the pryvyte
That been wythyn his paleyſe, that thou muſt pas by:
And when thow approchiſt, and art the caſtell nygh,

Blench fro the brode gate, and enter thow nat there,
For ther been men to keep it; yit have thow no fere;
Pas down on the right hond by the caſtell walle
Tyll thow fynd a window, and what ſo the byfall
Entis ther yf thow may, and be nothyng agaſt,
But walk forth in that entre: then ſhalt thow ſee in haſte
A porteolyſe the tofore; pas in boldly
Tyll thow com to an hall the fayriſt undir ſky:
The wallis been of marbill, yjoynid and ycloſid,
And the pilours of eryſtall, grete and wele propoſid:
The keveryng of bove is of ſalondyn,
And the pament beneth of gold and aſure fyne.
But whoſo paſſith thorough this hall hath nede to ren blyve,
Or els he myght be diſware of his own lyve,
For ther wythin liith a ſtoon that is ſo hote of kynd
That what thing com for by anoon it woll atend,
As bryght as eny kandell leem, and conſume anoon;
And ſo wold the hall alſo n'er coldnes of a ſtoon
That is yclepid Dionyſe, that ſet is hym ageyn;
So and thow lepe lightly thou ſhalt have no peyn,
For ethir ſtone in kynd proportioned they be,
Of hete and eke of coldnes of oon equalite.
Thow muſt pas thorough the hall, but tary nat I rede,
For thou ſhult fynd a dur up right afore thyn hede:
When thow'art entrid ther, and the dore apaſt,
Whatſo thow ſe ligg or ſtond be thow nat agaſt;
And yf thow drede eny thing do no more paſſ blowe,
But yit I rede the beware that it be ſomwhat lowe:
Ther been to libardis loos and untyed,
If that thy blowing of that othir in eny thing be ſpied
Anoon he rakith on the to ſeſe the by thy pate,
For ther n'ys thing in erth that he ſo much doth hate,
As breth of mann'ys mowith; wher'fore refreyn thee,
And blow but fair and ſoft, and when that nede be.
When thow art paſſid this hall anoon then ſhalt thow com
Into the fayreſt garden that is in Chriſtendom,
The wich thorough his clergy is made of ſuch deviſe
That a man ſhall ween he is in Paradiſe,
At his firſt comyng in, for melody and ſong,
And othir glorious thinges and deleſtabill among,
The wich Tholomeus, that ſomtyme Paynym was,
That of aſtronomy knew ev'ry poynt and caſe,
Bid it ſo deviſe, thorough his high conuyng,
That ther n'ys beſt in erth ne bird that doith ſing
That he n'ys there in figur in gold and ſylvir fyne,
And mow, as they wer quyk, knawe the ſotill engyne.
In mydward of this gardyn ſtant a feir tre
Of al maner levis that undir ſky be,
Yforgit and yfourmit eche in his degre
Of ſylvir and of gold fyne that luſty been to ſee.
This gardeyn is evir grene, and full of May flowris,
Of rede, white, and blew, and othir freſh colouris,
The wich been ſo redolent, and ſentyn ſo about,
That he muſt be right lewde therin ſhuld route.
Theſe monſtrefull thingis I deviſe to the
Becauſe thow ſhuldiſt nat of them abaſhid be.
When that thow comyſt there, ſo thow be ſtrong in thought,
And do be my counſell, drede the right nought,
For ther beth eighe tregetours that this gardyn kepith,
Four of them doith wauk while the four ſclepith,
The wich been ſo perfite of nygramance,
And of the art of apparens and of tragetrie,
That they make ſemen as to a mann'ys ſight
Abominabill wormys, that fore ought be afright
The hertieſt man on erth, but he warnyd were
Of the grifly ſightis that he ſhuld ſee there.
Among all othir there is a lyon white
That and he be a ſtraungir he rampith for to bite,
And hath tofore this tyme 500 men and mo
Devourid and yete, that thereforth have yge:
Yit ſhalt thow pas ſuyrly ſo thow do as I tell,
The tre I told tofore, that round as eny bell
Berith bow and braunche, traylyng to the ground,
And thow touch oon of them thow art ſtiff and ſound;
The tre hath ſuch vertu there ſhall nothing the dere:
Loke that be the firſt when thow comyſt there.
Then ſhalt thow ſe an entre by the ferther ſide;
Thoughe it be ſtreyte tofore, inner large and wyde
It growith more and more, and as a denour wryith;
Yit woll that wey the bryng there that Iſope liith,
Into the fayriſt chambir that evir man ſaw with eye.
When thow art there wythyn govern the wiſely,
For there ſhalt thow here al thyn empechement
Opynly declarid in Iſop'is preſent.
Report them wele and kepe them in thy mynd,
And aftir thy relacioune we ſhall ſo turn and wend,
Thorough help of God above, ſuch help for to make
That they ſhull be acombrit, and we right well to ſcape.
Now in ſoth, quod Beryn, a mann'ys hert may griſe
Of ſueh wondir weyis, for al my marchandiſe
I had levir leſe them oppon me take
Such a wey to pas. Then, Sir, for your ſake
I woll my ſelf, quod Geffrey: ſith I am enſuryd
To help the with my power thow ſhalt me amyrid
As forforth as I may; that I woll do my peyn
To bryng yow pleſaunt tyding, and retourn ageyn

Yit or the cok crow; and ther'for let me ſe
Whils I am out how merry ye can be.
Geffrey toke his leve; but who was fory the
But Beryn and his company? for when he was go
Thei had no maner joy, but dout and hevynes,
For of his reperyng thei had no ſikernes;
So every man to othir made his compleynt,
And wiſhid that of felony they had been atteynt,
And ſo them thought betir to end hevynes
Then every day to lak brede atte firſt mes;
For when our good is go what ſhall ſal of us?
Evir to be their thrallis, and peraventure were,
To leſe our lyf aftir yf we diſpleſe them ought.
Aftir Geffrey went this was all their thought
Throughout the nyght tyl cokkis gan to ſing;
But then encreſid anguiſhe; their hondis gan to wryng,
And curſid wynd and watir that them brought ther,
And wiſhid many tymes that he had been in here,
And were apaſſid and entrid into diſpeyr,
In as much as Geffrey did nat repeir:
Eche man ſeyd to othir it myght nat be ynayid
But Geffrey had ettirlich falſly them betrayid
Thoroughout all the long nyght.

. . . . . .

Tho went they to counſell a litill tofore the day,
And were all acordit for to fayl awey;
And ſo them thought betir, and leve their good ther,
Then abyde theroppon, and have more fere.
They made their takelyng redy, and wend the ſail across,
For to ſave their lyvis, and ſet nat of their los;
So fore they wer adred to be in ſervitute,
And hopid God above wold ſend them ſom refute
By ſom othir coſtis ther wynd them wold bryng:
And therwithall cam Geffrey on his ſtilt lepeing,
And cried wondir faſt by the watir ſyde.
When Beryn herd Geffrey he bid his men abyde,
And to launch out a bote and bryng Geffrey in,
For he may more avayl me now then al my kyn,
And he be trew and truſty, as myn hope is;
But yit ther'of had Beryn no full ſikernes.
Theſe Romeyns ſet in Geffrey with an hevy chere,
For they had levir ſaill forth then put them in weer
Both lyve and goodis: and evill ſuſpicioune
They had of this Geffrey; wherfore they gon roune,
Talkyng to eche othir, This man woll us betray.
Geffrey wiſt well inowghe he was nat to their pay,
And for verey angir he threw into the ſee
Both ſtilt and eke his crouch, that made wer of tre,
And gan them to comfort, and ſeid in this manere:
Benedicite! Beryn, why make ye ſuch chere?
For and yee wer hevy what ſhall yewr men do
But take enſampill of yew? and have no cauſe to;
For yit or it be eve yewr adverſaryes all
I ſhall make them ſpurn and have a fore fall,
And yee go quyte, and all yewr good, and have of theirs too,
And they to be right feign for to ſcape ſo
Wythout more daungir, and yewr wyl be;
For of the lawys her ſuch is the equyte
That *Who purſu othir and his pleynt be wrong*
I ſhall make amendis be he nevir ſo ſtrong;
Right as ſhuld the t'odir yf he condempned were
Right ſo ſhall the pleyntiff right as I yew lere;
And that ſhall preve by them, have ye no doute,
Yet or it be eve right low to yew to loute,
And ſubmit them to yew, and put them in yeur grace
By that tyme I have ymade all my wanlaſe;
And in hope to ſpede wel let ſhape us for to dyne,
Geffrey axid watir, and ſith brede and wyne,
And ſeit, It is holſom to broke our faſt betyme,
For the ſteward woll to the court at hour of pryme.
The ſonne gan to ſhyne and ſhope a feir dey;
But for aught that Geffrey coud do or ſey
Theſe Romeyns ſpokyn faſt all the dyner while,
That Geffrey with his ſotill wordis wold them begile.
So when they had ydyned they ryſen up echoone,
And drew them to counſell what was beſt to doon:
Som ſeyd the beſt rede that we do may,
To throw Geffrey ovir the bord, and ſeyll forth our way:
But for drede of Beryn ſom wold nat ſo,
Yit the more party aſſentid wele therto.
Geffrey and Beryn, and worthy Romeyns tweyn,
Stood a part within the ſhip, ſo Geffrey gan to ſeyn,
Beryn, beth aviſid; your men beth in diſtaunce:
Sith ye been her ſoveren put them in governaunce;
For methinkith they boldith contrary opynyoune,
And *Grace faylith comynlich wher is diviſioune.*
In the meen whyle that they gan thus to ſtryve
Hanybald was up, and ycom as blyve
To the brigg of the town ther the ſhippis rood,
And herd much noyſe; but litil while he bood,
For when he ſaw the ſaylis ſtond all acros,
Alas! quod this Hanybald, here growith a ſourt los
To me that am provoſt, and have in charge and heſt
All theſe fyve ſhippis undir myn areſt;
And ran into the town, and made an hidouſe cry,
And chargit all the cetezins to armys for to hy
From oſtrete tyl anothir, and rerid up al the town,
And made the trumpis blowe up and the bellis ſoun,
And ſey that the Romeyns wer in poynt to pas,
Tyl ther wer a thouſand, rathir mo then les,
Men y-armyd cleen, walkyng to the ſtronde
When Beryn them aſpied: Now, Geffrey, in thy honde
Stont lyf and goodis; doth with us what the lift
For all our hope is on the, comfort, help, and ſtift.

For we muſt bide aventure, ſuch as God wol ſhape,
For now I am in certen we mow in no wiſe ſcape.
Have no doubt, quod Geffrey, beth mery; let me aloon;
Getith a peir ſiſours, ſherith my berd anoon,
And aftirwerd lete top my hede haſtylich and blyve.
Som went to with ſeſours, ſom wyth a knyffe,
So what for ſorowe and haſt, and for lewd tole,
Ther was no man alyve bet like to a fole
Then Geffrey was by that tyme they had al ydo.
Hanybald clepid out Beryn, to Mote Hall for to go,
And ſtode upon the brigg with an huge route.
Geffrey was the firſt to Hanybald gan to loute.
And lokid out a fore ſhip: God bleſs yew! Sir, quod he.
Wher art thow now, Beryn? com forth, behold
Her is an huge pepill yrayd and ydight; [and ſe,
All theſe been my children that been in armys
Yiſtirdey I gat them: is nat mervaill, [bryght;
That they been hidir ycom to be of our counſaill,
And to ſtond up by us, and help us in our ple?
A! myne own childryn, bleſſid mut ye be!
Quod Geffrey, with an high voiſe, and had a nyce viſage,
And gan to daunce for joy in the fore ſtage.
Hanybald lok'd on Geffrey as he wer amaſid,
And beheld his countenaunce, and how he was yraſid,
But evirmore he thought that he was a fole
Naturell of kynde, and had noon othir tool,
As ſemed by his wordis and his viſage both,
And thought it had been foly to wex with hym wroth,
And gan to bord ageyn, and axid hym in game,
Sith thou art our fadir who is then our dame?
And how and in what plaſe were we begete?
Yiſtirday, quod Geffrey, pleyng in the ſtrete
At a gentil game that clepid is the Quek,
A long peny halter was caſt about my nek,
And yknet faſt with a riding knot,
And caſt over a perch, and hale along my throte.
Was that a game, quod Hanybald, for to hang thy ſelve?
So they ſeyd about me, a thouſand eche by hymſelf.
How ſcapiddiſt thow, quod Hanybald, that thou wer nat dede?
Therto can I anſwer without any rede:
I bare thre diſe in myn own purs,
For I go nevir without, fare I betir or wers;
I kiſt them forth all thre, and too fill am'ys,
But here now what fill aftir, right a merveloufe caſe;
Ther cam a mowſe lep forth, and ete the third boon,
That puffid out her ſkyn as grete as ſhe myght goon;
And in this maner wiſe of the mowſe and me
All ye be ycom my children fair and fre;
And yit or it be eve fall woll ſuch a chaunce
To ſtond in my power yew all to avaunce,
For and we plede well to day we ſhall be riche inowghe.
Hanybald of his wordis hertlich loughe,
And ſo did all that herd hym, as they myght wele,
And had grete joy wyth hym for to tell,
For they knew hym noon othir but a ſole of kynd
And all this was his diſcrecioune, and that previd the end,
Thus whils Geffrey japid to make their hertis light
Beryn and his company were rayid and ydight,
And lohdid them in botis, ferefull how to ſpede,
For all their thoughtis in balance ſtode betwene hope and drede:
But yet they did their peyn to make lightſome chere,
As Geffrey them had enfourmed, of port and all manere
Of their governaunce all the long day [wey
Tyll their plee wer endit; ſo went they forth their
To the court with Hanybald. Then Beryn gan to ſey,
What nedith this, Sir Hanybald, to make ſuch aray
Sith we been peſe-marchantis, and uſe no ſpoliacioune?
For ſoth, Sir, quod Hanybald, to me was made relacioune
Yee wer in poynt to void; and yef ye had do ſo
Yee had loſt yewr lyvis, without wordis mo.
Beryn held hym ſtyll. Geffrey ſpak anoon;
No les wed them lyvis? Whi ſo, good Sir Jon?
That wer ſomwhat to much as it ſemeth me;
But ye be ovirwiſe that dwell in this cete;
For ye have begonne a thing makith you right bold
And yit or it be eve as folis ſhull yee be hold:
And eke ye devyne for ſhipmanny's craft,
And wotith litill what longith to afore the ſhip aud bafft,
And namelich in the dawnyng when ſhipmen firſt ariſe,
My good frend, quod Hanybald, in a ſcornyng wiſe,
Yee muſt onys enfourm me thorough yowr diſcrecioune,
But firſt yee muſt anſwer to a queſtioune;
Why make men croſ-ſail in myddis of the maſt?
For to taken the ſhip and ſeek more blaſt.
Why goon the yemen to bote ankirs to hale?
For to make them redy to walk to the ale.
Why hale they up ſtonys by the crane lyne?
To make the tempeſt ſeſe and the ſonne ſhyne.
Why cloſe they the port with the ſee bord?
For the maſtir ſhuld awake at firſt word.
Thou art a redy reve, quod Hanybald, in fay.
Yee, Sir, trewly, for ſothe is that ye yew ſey;
Geffrey evir clappid as doith a watir myll,
And made Hanybald to laugh al his hert ſyll.
Beryn, quod this Geffrey, retourn thy men ageyn;
What ſhull they do with the at court? no man on them pleyn.
Plede thy caſe thy ſelve right as thow haſt ywrought;
To bide with the ſhippis my purpoſe is and thought.
Nay, forſoth, quod Hanybald, thow ſhalt abyde on lond,
Wee have no folis but the; and toke hym by the hond,

For thow art wise in law to plede all the case.
That can I betir, quod Geffrey, then eny man in this place.
What seyst thow therto, Beryn? shall I tell thy tale?
Hanybald likid his wordis wele, and forward gan hym hale.
Beryn made him angry, and sighid wondir sore,
For Geffrey hym had enfourmid of every poynt to fore,
How he hym shuld govern all the long day.
Geffrey chasid hym ageyn; Sey me ye or nay;
Mayst'owe nat here speke some maner word?
Leve thy blab, lewd sole, me likith nat thy bord:
I have anothir thought, quod Beryn, wherof thow carist lite.
Clepeist thow me a Fole, quod Geffrey? al that I may the wite:
But first when we out of Rome saillid both in fere
Tho I was thy felawe and thy partinere,
For tho the marchandise was more then half myne,
And sith that thow com hidir thow takist all for thyne.
But yit or it be eve I wol make oon beheft,
But thow have my help thy part shall be left.
Thyn help, quod Beryn; lewde sole, thow art more then masid;
Dres the to the shippis ward with thy crown yrasid,
For I myght nevir spare the bet: trus and be agoo.
I woll go with the, quod Geffrey, wher thow wolt or no,
And lern to plede law to wyn both howse and lond.
So thow shalt, quod Hanybald, and led hym by the hond,
And leyd his hond oppon his nek: but and he had yknow
Whom he had led, in sikernes he had well levir in snowe
Have walkid xl myle, and rathir then fail more;
For he wisshid that Geffrey had ybe unbore
Full oft tyme in that day or the ple wer do,
And so did all that wrought Beryn sham and woo.
Now yee that list abide and here of sotilte
Mowe know how that Beryn sped in his ple,
And in what aray to the court he went,
And how Hanybald led Geffrey, disware of his entent;
But yet he axid of Geffrey, What is thy name I pray?
Gylhochet, quod Geffrey, men clepid me yistirday.
And wher weer thow ybore? I n'ote I make a vow,
Seyd Geffrey to this Hanybald, I axe that of yew,
For I can tell no more but here I stond nowe.
Hanybald of his wordis hertlich lowghe,
And held hym for a passyng sole to serve eny lord.
Thus they romyd janglyng into the court ward,
But or they com ther the steward was yset,
And the grettist of the town a company ymet,
And gon to stryve fast who shuld have the good
That com was with Beryn ovir the salt flood.
Som seyd oon and som seyde anothir;
Som wold have the shippis, the parell, and the rothir;
Som his eyen, som his lyf wold have, and no les,
Or els he shuld for them fyne or he did pas;
And in the mene whils they wer in this afray
Beryn and these Romeyns wer com, in good aray
As myght be made of woll, and of colour graynyd;
They toke a syde bench that for them was ordeynyd.
When all was husht and still Beryn arose anoon,
And stode in the myddis of the hall tofore them everichone,
And seyd, Sir Steward, in me shall be no let;
I am ycom to answer as my day is set:
Do me ryght and reson; I axe yew no more.
So shall I, quod the steward, for ther'to I am swore.
He shall have right, quod Geffrey, wher thow wolt or no,
For and thow mys onys thy jugement ondo.
I woll to the Emperour of Rome my cosyn,
For of o cup he and I full oft have dronk the wyne,
And yit we shull heraftir as oft as we mete,
For he is long the gladder when I send hym to grete.
This Geffrey stode upon a fourm, for he wold be sey
Above all othir the shouldris and the cry,
And starid al about with his lewd berd,
And was yhold a very fole of ech man hym herd.
The steward, and the officers, and the burgeysis all,
Laughid at hym hertlich; the criour gan to call
The burgeyse that had pleyd with Beryn at ches,
And he arose quiklich, and gan hym for to dres
Afore the steward at barr, as the maner is;
He gan to tell his tale wyth grete redines:
Here me, Sir Steward, this day is me set
To have right and reson; I axe yew no bet,
Of Beryn that here stondith, that with me yistirday
Made a certen covenaunt, and at ches we did pley,
That whoso were ymatid of us both too
Shuld do the todir's bidding, and yf he wold not so
He must drink all the watir that salt wer in the se:
Thus I to hym furid and he also to me.
To preve my tale trew I am nat all aloon:
Up rose ten burgeysis quyklich anoon,
And affermyd every word of his tale soth,
And made them all redy for to do their othe.
Evander the steward, Bery, now, quod he,
Thow most answere nede; it woll noon othir be:
Take thy counsell to the: spede on; I have doon.
Beryn held hym styll: Geffrey, spak anoon;
Now be my trowith, quod Geffrey, I mervell much of yew
To bid us go to counsell, and knowith me wise inowghe,
And evir sul avisid, in twynkelyng of an eye,
To make a short answer but yf my mowith be dry.
Shuld we go to counsell for o word or tweyn?
Be my trowith we n'yll; let se mo that pleyn;
And but he be yanswer'd, and that right anoon,
I geve yew leve to rise and walk out every choon,
And aspyd redily yf ye synd me there,
In the meen whils I woll abyde here;
Nay, I tell trewly, I am wiser than ye ween,
For ther n'yis noon of you woot redely what I meen.

Every man gan laughe all his hert fill
Of Geffrey and his wordis; but Beryn held hym
And was clean astonyd; but yit ner the lattir [still,
He held it nat al foly that Geffrey did clattir,
But wisely hym governyd, as Geffrey hym taught.
For percell of his wisdom he had tofore smaught.
Sir Steward, quod Beryn, I undirstond wele
The tale of this burgeyse; now let anothir tell,
That I may take counsell and answer all at onys,
I graunt, quod the steward; then axing for the nonys,
Sith thow wold be rewlid by the fol'is rede,
For he is right a wise man to help the in thy nede.
Up aros the accusours queynthish anoon;
Hanybald was the first of them everichoon,
And gan to tell his tale with a proud chere.
Yistirda , Soverens, when I was here
Beryn and thes burgeyse gon to plede fast
For pleying at ches; so ferforth at last,
Thorough vertu of m n office, that I had in charge
Ber n's fyve shippis, for to go at large,
And to be in answer her this same day;
So walkyng to the strondward we bargeynyd by the wey
That I shuld have the marchandise that Beryn with hym broght,
Wherof I am sesid, as ful sold and boughte,
In covenaunte that I shuld his shippis fill ageyn
Of my marchandise, such as he tofore had seyn
n myn own plase, howsis to or thre,
Full of marchandise as they myght be;
And I am evir redy, whensoever he woll,
Let hym go or sende, and charge his shippis full
Of such marchandise as he findith there,
For in such wordis we acordit were.
Up rose x burgeysis, noe tho that rose tofore,
But othir, and made them redy to have swore
That every word of Hanybald, from the begynnyng to the end,
Was soth and eke trewe, and with their mende
Full prest they wer to preve; and seyd they wer present
At covenaunt making, by God omnipotent.
It shal nat nede, quod Geffrey, whils that I here stond,
For I woll preve it my self with my right honde,
For I have been in four batellis heretofore,
And this shall be the fift, and therfor I am swore.
Beholdith, and seith, and turnyd hym about;
The steward and the burgeyse gaunyd all about;
The Romeyns held them still, and lawhghid but a lite.
Wyth that cam the blynd man his tale to endite,
That God hym grant wynnyng right as he hath aservid.
Beryn and his company stood all astryvyd
Betwene hope and drede, right in high distres,
For of wele or of woo they had no sikernes.
Beryn, quod this blynd, though I may nat see
Stond nere yit the barr, my comyng is for the,
That wrongfullich thow witholdist my both to eyen,
The wich I toke the for a tyme, and quyklich to me hijen,
And take them me ageyn, as our covenaunt was,
Beryn, I take no reward of othir mennys case,
But oonlich of myn oon; that stont me most an hond,
Now blessid be God in heven that brought the to this lond!
For sith our last parting many betir teris
Have I lete for thy love, that som tyme partineris
Of wynnnyg and of lesing were yeris fele,
And evir I fond the trewe, tyl at the last thow didst stele
Awey wyth my too eyen that I toke to the
To se the tregetours pley and their sotilte,
As yistirday here in this same plase
Tofore yew, Sir Steward, rehersid as it was.
Full trew is that byword, *A man to servesell Ledith oft Beyard from his own stabill.*
Beryn, by the I meen, though thow make it straunge,
For thow knowist trewly that I made no chaunge
Of my good eyen for thyn that badder were.
Therwith stode up burgeyse four witnes to bere.
Beryn held hym styll, and Geffrey spak anoon;
Now of thy lewd compleynt, and thy masid moon,
By my trowith, quod Geffrey, I have grete mervaill,
For though thow haddist eyen-sight it shuld litil availe;
Thow shuldist nevir fare the bet, but the wors in fay,
For al thing may be still now for the in house and way,
And yf thow haddist thyn eyen thou woldist no counsell hele;
I know wele by thy sisnamy thy kynd wer to stele:
And eke it is thy profite and thyn ese also
To be blynd as thow art; for now whereso thow go
Thow hast thy lyvlode whils thow art alyve,
And yf thow myghtist se thow shuldist nevir thryve.
Al the house throughout save Beryn and his feris
Lawghid of Geffrey, that watir on their lëris
Ran down from their eyen for his masid wit.
Wythat cam the woman, hir tang was nat slyt,
Wyth 15 burgeysis, and women also fele,
Her quarel for to preve, and Beryn to apele,
With a foir knave child ylokе wythin their armys,
And gan to tel her tale of wrongis and of harmys,
And eke of unkyndnes, untrowith, and falshede,
That Beryn had ywrought to hir, that quyntlich from hir yede
Anoon oppon her wedding, when he his wyl had doon,
And brought hir wyth chyld, and lete hir sit aloon
Wythout help and comfort from that day, and nowith
He proferid me nat to kys onys with his mowith,
As yistirday, Sir Steward, afore yew eche word
Was rehersid here, my pleynt is of record,
And this dey is me set for to have reson.
Let hym make amendis, or els tell encheson

Why hym ought nat fynd, as man ought, his wyf.
These fiftene burgeysis quyklich al so blyve,
And as fele wymen as stode by hir ther,
Seyd that they were present when they weddit were,
And that every word that the woman seyde
Was trew, and eke Beryn had hir so betray'd.
Benedicite! quod Geffrey, Beryn, hast thow a wyf?
Now have God my trowith the dayis of my lyf
I shal trust the the les thow teldist me nat to fore
As wele of thy wedding and of thy sone ybore.
Go to, and kys them both, thy wyf and eke thyn heir:
Be thow nat ashamyd, for they both be feyr.
This wedding was right privy, but I shall make it couthe:
Behold thy sone, it semith crope out of thy mowith,
And eke of thy condicioune both soft and some.
Now am I glad thyn heir shall with us to Rome,
And I shall teche hym, as I can, whils that he is young,
Every day by the strete to gadir houndis dung
Tyll it be abill of prentyse to craft of *Taverner* tanry
And aftir I shall teche hym for to catche a fly,
And to mend mytens when they been to tore,
And aftir to cloute shoun whan he is elder more;
Yit for his parentyne to pipe as doith a mowse
I woll hym teche, and for to pike a snayl out of his howse,
And to berk as doith an hound, and sey Baw, baw,
And turn round about as a cat doith wyth a straw,
And to blete as doith a shepe, and ney as doith an hors,
And to low as doith a cow; and as myn own corps
I woll cherish hym every day for his modirs sake:
And gan to stappe ner the child, to have ytake,
As semed by his countenaunce, although he thought nat so:
But modir was evir ware, and blenchid to and fro,
And leyd hir hond betwene, and lokid somwhat wroth,
And Geffrey in pur wrath beshrewid them all both;
For by my trowith, quod Geffrey, wel masid is thy pan,
For I woll teche thy sone the craftis that I can,
That he in tyme to come myght win his lyvlode,
To wex therfor angry thow art verry wood.
Of husbond, wyff, and sone, by the Trynyte
I n'ote wich is the wisest of them all thre.
No, sothly, quod the steward; it lith all in thy noll
Both wit and wysdom, and previth by thy poll:
For all be that Geffrey wordit sotilly,
The steward and the burgeysis held it for soly.
All that evir he seyd, and toke it for good game,
And had full litill knowlech he was Geffrey the lame.
Beryn and his company stode still as stone
Betwene hope and drede, disware how it shuld goon,
Saff Beryn trist in party that Geffrey wold hym help,
But yit into that hour he had no cause to yelp;
Wherfor they made much sorowe, that dole was and pete.
Geffrey herd hym sigh sore: What devil is yew? quod he:
What nede yew be sory whils I stond here?
Have I nat enfourmid yew how and in what manere
That I yew wold help, and bryng them in the snare?
Yf ye coud plede as well as I, full litill wold ye care.
Pluk up thy hert, quod Geffrey, Beryn, I speke to the.
Leve thy blab lewd, quod Beryn to hym age;
It doith no thing availl that sorowe com on thy hede;
It is nat worth a fly al that thow hast seyde.
Have we nat els now for to think oppon
Saff here to jangill? Machyn rose anoon,
And went to the barr, and gan to tell his tale;
He was as fals as Judas, that set Criste at sale.
Sir Steward, quod this Machyn, and the burgeysis al,
Knowith wele how Melan with purpill and with pall,
And othir marchandise, seven yere ago
Went toward Rome, and how that I also
Have enquered sith, as reson woll and kynde,
Sith he was my fadir, to know of his ende;
For yit sith his departing tyl it was yistirday
Met I nevir creature that me coud wish or say
Reedynes of my fadir, dede othir alyve;
But, blessid be God in heven! in this thev'is selyve
The knyff I gaff my fadir was yistirday ysound:
Sith I hym apele let hym be fast ybound.
The knyf I know wel inowe; also the man stont here,
And dwellith in this town, and is a cotelere,
That made the same knyf wyth his too hondis,
That wele I woot there is noon like to sech al Cristen londis;
For three precioufe stonys been wythin the haft
Perfectlich ycouchit, and sotillich by craft
Endendit in the haft, and that right coriously,
A saphir, and a salidone, and a rich ruby.
The cotelere cam lepeing forth with a bold chere
And seyd to the steward that Machyn told now here
Every word is trew, so beth the stonys set;
I made the knyf my self, who myght know it bet?
And toke the knyff to Machyn, and he me pay'd wele;
So is this felon gilty; there is no more to tell.

Up aroſe burgeyſis by two by three by four,
And ſey'd they wer preſent the ſame tyme and hour
When Machyn wept ſore, and brought his fadir's gownd,
And gaf hym the ſame knyff oppon the ſee ſtrond.
Beth ther eny mo pleyntifs of record?
Quod Geffrey to the ſteward: and he ageyn-ward;
How ſemeth the, Gylhochet, beth ther nat inowghè?
Make thyn anſwer, Beryn, caſe that thow mowe,
For oon or othir thow muſt ſey, although it nat availle,
And but thow leſe or thow go methinkith grete mervaill.
Beryn goith to counſell and his company,
And Geffrey bode behinde to her more and ſe,
And to ſhew the burgeyſe ſomewhat of his hert;
And ſeyd, But I make the pleyntifs for to ſmert,
And alle that them meyntenith, for aught that is yſeyd,
I woll grant yew to kut the eris fro my hede.
My maſter is at counſell, but counſell hath he noon
For but I hym help he is cleen undoon;
But I woll help hym al that I can, and meyntene hym alſo
By my power and connyng, ſo I am bound ther'to;
For I durſt wage battell wyth yew, though yee be ſtrong,
That my maiſter is in the trowith and ye be in the wrong;
For and we have lawe I ne hold yew but diſtroied
In yewr own falſhede, ſo be yee now aſpied;
Wherfor yit or eve I ſhal abate yewr pride,
That ſom of yew ſhall be right feyn to ſlynk away and hide.
The burgeyſes gon to lawgh, and ſcornyd hym ther'to.
Gylhochet, quod Evander, and thow cowdiſt ſo
Bryng it thus about, it were a redy wey.
He is a good fool, quod Hanybald, in fay,
To put hymſelf aloon in ſtrengith and eke in wit
Ageyns all the burgeyſis that on this bench ſit.
What clatir is this, quod Machyn, al day with a fole?
Tyme is now to worch with ſom othir tole,
For I am certeyn of their anſwer that they wol fail,
And lyf for lyf of my fadir what may that avail?
Wher'for beth aviſid, for I am in no doute
The goodis been ſufficient to part al aboute,
So may every party pleyntif have his part.
That is reſon, quod the blind; a trew man thow art;
And eke it were untrowith and eke grete ſyn
But eche of us that pleynith myght ſomwhat wyn.
Hanybald bote his lippis, and herd them both wele;
Towching the marchandiſe o tale I ſhall yew tell,
And eke make a vow, and hold my beheſt,
That of the marchandiſe yewr part ſhall be left;
For I have made a bargeyn that may nat be undo;
I woll hold his covenaunt and he ſhal myn alſo.
Up roos quicklich the burgeyſe Syrophanes;
Hanybald, quod he, the law goith by no lanys,
But hold ferth the ſtreyt wey, even as doith a lyne;
For yiſtirday when Beryn with me did dyne
I was the firſt perſon that put him in areſt;
And for he wold go large thow haddiſt in charge and heſt
To ſeſe both ſhip and goodis til I were anſwerid;
Then muſt I firſt be ſervid, this knowith al men ylerid.
The woman ſtode beſidis, and cried wondir faſt,
Ful ſoth is that byword, *To pot who comyth laſt*
He worſt is ſervid: and ſo it farith by me:
Yit nethirles, Sir Steward, I truſt to yewr lentè,
That knowith beſt my cauſe and my trew entent;
I axe yew no more but rightful jugement:
Let me have part with othir ſith he my huſbond is:
Good Sir, beth aviſid; I axe yew nat amys.
Thus they gon to ſtryve, and wer of high mode
For to depart emong them othir mennys good,
Wher they toſore had nevir properte,
Ne nevir ſhuld theraftir by doom of equyte;
But they had othir cauſe then they had tho.
Beryn was at counſell, his hert was full woo,
And his meyny ſory, diſtrakt, and al amayide,
For tho they levid noon othir but Geffrey had betrayide;
Becauſe he was ſo long they coud no maner rede,
But everich by hymſelf wiſhid he had be dede.
O myghtful God! they ſeyd, I trow toſore this day
Was nevir gretter treſon, fere, ne affray,
Ywrought onto mankind then now is to us here,
And namelich by this Geffrey with his ſotil chere;
So feithful he made it he wold us help echone.
And now we be ymyryd he letith us ſit aloon.
Of Geffrey, quod Beryn, be as it be may;
We mut anſwer nede, ther is noon othir way;
And ther'for let me know your wit and your counſaile.
They wept, and wrong their hondis, and gan to waille
The tyme that they were bore, and ſhortly of the [lyve
They wiſhid that they wer. With that came Geffrey blive,
Paſſing them towards, and began to ſmyle.
Beryn axid Geffrey wher he had be al the while?
Have mercy oppon us, and help us as thow hight.
I woll help yow right wele through grace of Godd'is might;
And I can tell yow tiding of their governaunce.
They ſtondin altercatioune and ſtryf in poynt to praunce
To depart your goodis, and levith verily
That it wer impoſſibil yew to remedy;
But their high pride and their preſumpcioune
Shal be yit or eve their confuſioune;
And to make amendis ech man for his pleynt,
Let ſe ther'for your good aviſe how they might be ateynt.
The Romeyns ſtode ſtill, as who had ſhor their hede.
In feith, quod Beryn, we can no maner rede,
But in God and yew we ſubmit us all,
Body, lyf, and goodis, to ſtond or to fall,

And nevir for to travers o word that thow seyst;
Help us, good Geffrey, as wele as thou mayst.
Deperdeux! quod Geffrey, and I woll do my peyn
To helpyow as my comyng woll strech and ateyn,
The Romeyns went to barr, and Geffrey altofore
With a nice countenance, bare fote, and to tore,
Pleying with a yerd he bare in his honde,
And was evir wistlyng at every pase comaunde.
The steward and the burgeysis had game inowghe
Of Geffrey'is nice comyng, and hertlich lowghe;
And eche man seyd, Gylhochet, com nere;
Thow art right welcome, for thow makist us chere.
The same welcom, quod Geffrey, that yee woll us
Fall vppon yewr hedis, I pray to God, and wers.
They held hym for a verry sole, but he held them
wel more;
And so he made them in breff tyme, all though
they wer nat shore.
Styntith now, quod Geffrey, and let make pese;
Of myrthis and of japis tyme is now to cese,
And speke of othir mater that we have to doon,
For and we hew amys eny maner stone
We know wele in certeyn what pardon we shul
have;
The more is our nede us to defend and save.
My master hath be at counsell, and ful avisid is
That I shall have the wordis, speke I wele or mys;
Wherfor, Sir Steward, and ye burgeysis all,
Sittith upright, and writtith nat, for aventuris that
may fall;
For and ye deme untrewely, or do us eny wrong,
Ye shull be refourmyd, be ye nevir so strong,
Of every poynt and injury, and that in grete haste,
For he is nat unknowe to us that may yow chaste:
Hold forth the right wey, and by no side lanys.
And as towching the first pleyntif Syrephanes,
That pleyd with my master yistirday at ches,
And made a certeyn covenaunte, who that had
the wers
In the last game, al thoughe I wer nat there,
Shuld do the todir's bidding, whatsoever it wer,
Or drynk all the watir that salt wer in the see;
Thus I trowe, Sir Steward, ye woll record the ple,
And yf I have ymissid in lettir or in word
The lawe, wol I be rewlid aftir yewr record;
For we be ful avisid in this wise to answere.
Evander the steward, and al men that wer there,
Had mervil much of Geffrey, that spak so redely,
Whose wordis tofore semyd al foly,
And wer astonyed cleen, and gan for to drede,
And ev'ry man tyl othir lenyd with his hede,
And seyd he reported the tale right formally;
He was no sole in certen, but wise, ware, and sely,
For he hath but yjapid us and scornyd heretofore,
And we have hold hym a sole, but we be wel
more.
Thus they stodied on Geffrey, and laughed tho
right naught.
When Geffrey had aspied they wer in such thought,
And their hertis trobelid, pensyf, and anoyed,
Hym lyst to dryve in bet the nayl, till they were
fully cloyid.
Soverens Sirs, he seyd, sith that it so is
That in reporting of our ple ye fynd nothing amys,
As provith wele yowr scilence, eke ye withseyth
O word of our tale, but clene without spot, [nat
Then to our answer I prey yow take hede,
For we wol seyal the trowith right as it is in dede;
For this is soth and certen, it may nat be with-
seyd,
That Beryn that here stondith was thus ovirpleid
In the last game, when wagir was opon;
But that was his sufferaunce, as ye shull here anoon,
For in all this cete ther n'ys no maner man
Can piey betir at ches then my mastir can;
Ne bet then I, though I it sey, can nat half so much;
Now how he lost it by his wyll the cause I woll
teche;
For ye wend and ween that he had hym engyned.
But ye shul sele in every veyn that ye be undir-
mined,
And ybrought at ground, and eke ovirmusid.
And agenst the first that Beryn is accusid
Herith now ententyflich. When we wer on the see
Such a tempest on us fill that noon myght othir se
Of thundir, wynd, and lightenyng, and stormys
ther among.
Fiftene dayis during the tempest was so strong
That eche man till othir began hym for to shryve,
And made their avowis, yf they myght have the
lyve,
Som to se the sepulkir, and som to othir place,
To sech holy seyntis for help and for grace;
Som to fast and do pennaunce, and som do almys-
dede;
Tyl at last, as God wold, a voise to us seyd,
In our most turment, and desperat of mynd,
That yf we wold be savid my maister must hym
bynd
Be seith and eke be vow, when he cam to lond,
To drink al the salt watir within the see strond,
Without drinking eny sope of the fresh watir;
And taught hym al the sotilte how and in what
manere
That he shuld wirch by engyne and by a sotill
charm, [harm,
To drink all the salt watir and have hymself no
But stop the fresh rivers by every cost side,
That they enter nat in the se thorough the world
wyde.
The voise we herd but naught we saw; so wer our
witts ravid,
For this was end fynally, yf we lust be savid.
Wher'for my master Beryn, when he cam to this
port,
To his avow and promys he made his first resort,
Or that he wold bergeyn eny marchandise,
And right doith these marchandis in the same wise
That maken their avowis in saving of their lyv'is,
They completyn their pilgremagis or they se their
wyvis.
So mowe ye ondirstond that my master Beryn
Of fre will was ymatid, as he that was a pilgrym,
And myght nat perfourm by many thowsand part
His avow and his hest wythout right sotil art,
Without help and strength of many mennys
myght. [right
Sir Steward, and Sir Burgeyse, if we shul have

Sirophanes muſt do coſt and aventure,
To ſtop al the freſh ryvers into the ſee that entir,
For Beryn is redy in al thing hym to quyte,
So he be in defaute muſt pay for the wite.
Sith ye been wiſe al what nede is much clatir?
Ther was no covenaunte them betwene to drink freſh watir.
When Sirophanes had yherd al Geffrey's tale,
He ſtode al abaſhid, with colour wan and pale,
And lokid oppon the ſteward with a rewful chere,
And on othir frendſhip and neyhbours he had there,
And preyd them of counſell the anſwere to reply.
Theſe Romeyns, quod the ſteward, been wondir
And eke right ymmagytyf, and of ſotil art, [ſely,
That I am in grete dowte howe yee ſhul depart
Without harm in oon ſide: our lawis, well thow woſt,
Is to pay damagis, and eke alſo the coſt,
Of every party plentyf that fallith in his pleynt:
Let hym go quyt I counſell, yf it may ſo be queynt.
I merveil, quod Sirophanes, of their ſotilte,
But ſith that it ſo ſtondith, and may noon othir be,
I do woll be counſell, and graunted Beryn quyte.
But Geffrey thought anothir, and without reſpite,
Sirs, he ſeyd, me wetith wele that ye wol do us right,
And ſo ye muſt nedis, and ſo ye have us highte;
And therefore, Sir Steward, ye occupy our plaſe,
And ye know wele what law wol in this caſe;
My maſtir is redy to perfourme his avow.
But natheleſs, quod the ſteward, I cannat wete how
To ſtop all the freſh watir were poſſibilite.
Yis, in ſoth, quod Geffrey, who had of gold plente
As man coud wiſh and it myght well be do:
But that is nat our defaute, he hath no treſour to.
Let hym go to in haſte, or find us ſuerte
To make amendis to Beryn for his iniquite,
Wrong, and harm, and treſpas, and undewe wexacioune,
Loſt of ſale, and marchandiſe, diſeſe, and tribulacioune,
That we have ſuſtenyd thorough his iniquite,
What vaylith it to tary us? for though ye ſotil pry
We ſhul have reſon wher ye wol or no,
So woll we that ye knowe what that we woll do;
In certen ſull aviſid to ſope for to paſe,
And declare every poynt, them ore and eke the laſe,
That of yeur opyn errours hath pleyne correctioune,
And agenys his jugement is noon protectioune:
He is yewr lord riall, and ſoveren jugge and lele,
That and ye work in eny poynt to hym liith our apele.
So when the ſteward had yherd, and the burgeyſis alle,
How Geffrey had yſteryd, that went ſo nighe the gall,
What for ſhame, and drede of more harm, and repreſſe,
They made Sirophanes, weer hym looth or leſſe,
To take Beryn gage, and plegg find alſo,
To byde the ward and jugement of that he had myſdo.
Now ferthermore, quod Geffrey, ſith that it ſo is
That of the firſt plentyf we have ſiſherne,
Now to the Marchant we muſt nedis anſwere,
That bergeyned with Beryn al that his ſhippe bere,
In covenaunte that he ſhuld his ſhippis fill ageyn
Of othir marchandiſe that he toſore had ſeyn
In Hanybald'is plaſe, howſis to or thre,
Full of marchandiſe as they might be;
Let us pas thidir, yf eny thing be there
At our luſt and liking, as they accordit were.
I graunt wele, quod Hanybald, thow ſaiſt but righte;
Up aroſe theſe burgeyſis, Thow ſaiſt but right.
The ſteward and his comperis entrid firſt the howſe,
And ſaw nothing within, ſtraw, ne leff, ne mowſe,
Save tymbir, and the tyle ſtonys, and the walls white.
I trow, quod the ſteward, the wynnyng will be but lite
That Beryn woll now get in Hanybald, is pleynt,
For I can ſe noon othir but they woll be ateynt,
And clepid them in echone, and went out hym-ſelve. [ſelve,
As ſone as they were entrid they ſaw no mannt
For ſoris of their hert, but, as toſore is ſeyd,
The howſe was cleen yſwept; then Geffrey ſeit they preyde,
To help yf he coud. Let me aloon, quod he,
Yit ſhul they have the wers as ſotil as they be.
Evander the ſteward in the mene while
Spak to the burgeyſe, and began to ſmyle;
Though Sirophanes be yhold thes Romeyns for to cure,
Yit I trow that Hanybald woll put hym to the wers,
For I am ſuyr and certeyn within they ſhul not fynd?
What ſey ye be my pleynt, Sirs, quod the blynd?
For I make a vow I woll nevir ceſe
Tyl Syrophanes have of Beryn a pleyn releſe,
And to make hym quyte of his ſubmiſſioune,
Els wol I have no pete of his contritioune,
But folow hym al ſo ferſly as I can or may
Tyll I have his eyen both to away.
Now in feith, quod Machyn, and I wol have his lyffe,
For though he ſcape yew all, with me woll he not ſtryffe,
But be right feyn in hert all his good forſake
For to ſcape wyth hys lyf, and to me it take.
Beryn and his feleſhip wer within the houſe,
And ſpeken of their anſwer, and made but litill rouſe,
But evir preyd Geffrey to help yf he coud ought.
I woll nat faill, quod Geffrey, and was toſore bethought
Of too botirfliis, as white as eny ſnowe;
He lete them flee within the houſe, that ſtirt on the wowe

Thay clevid wondir fast, as their hynd wall,
Aftir they had flew to reft anothir pull
When Geffrey faw the botersliis cleving on the wall
The fteward and the hargeyfe in he gan call;
Lo! Sirs, he fayd, whafo evir repent,
We have thofe marchandife moft to our talent
That we fynd herein. Behold, Sir Hanybal,
The yondir botirfliis that clevith on the wall;
Of fuch ye muft fill our fhippis all fyve.
Plak up thy hert Beryn, for thow moft nedis thryve;
For when we out of Rome in Marchantfare went,
To purchafe botirfliis was our moft entent;
Yit woll I tell the caufe efpecial and why:
There is a leche in Room that hath ymade a cry
To make an oyntement to cure all tho ben blynde,
And al maner infirmytees that growith in manhynde. [ye mut hy.
The day is fhort; the work is long: Sir Hanyball,
When Hanybald herd this tale, he fayd pryvely
In counfell to the fteward; In foth I have the wers,
For I am fikir by this pleynt that fhall I litil purs.
So me feemeth, quod the fteward, for in the world rounde
So many botirfliis wold nat be founde
I trow o fhip to charge; whes'for me thinkith beft
Let hym have his good ageyn, and be in pefe and reft.
And yit is an aventure and thow fcape fo
Thy covenaunt to relefe without more ado.
The burgeyfis everichone, that were of that cete,
Were anoyid fore when they herd of this plee;
Geffrey with his wifdom held them hard and ftreyte,
That they were acombrit in their own diftreyte.
When Hanybald with his frendis had fpoke of this matere [manere:
They drew them towards Beryn, and feid in this
Only for botirfliis ye com fro our contre,
And we you tell in fikirnes and epon our fe,
That fo many botirflyes we fhul nevir gete,
Wherefore we be avifid othirwife to trete;
That Hanybald fhal relefe his covenaunt that is makid, [ranfakid.
And delyver the good ageyn that from you was
Nay forfoth, quod Geffrey, us nedith no relefe;
Ye fhull hold our covenaunt and we fhall ours
For we fhull have refon wher ye woll or no [alfo,
While Hope is alyve; I am nothyng aferd,
For I can wipe all this plee cloen from your berd,
And ye blench onys out of the high wey. [deley.
Thei proferid hym plegg and gage without more
Now ferthirmore, quod Geffrey, us ought to procede, [nede;
For to the blynd mann'ys poynt we muft anfwer
That, for to tell trowith, he lyvith all to long
For his own fawte and his own wrong
On Beryn he hath furmyfid, as previth by his plee,
And that ye fhull opynlich know wele and fee;
For as I underftode hym he feyd that fele yeris
Beryn, that here ftondith, and he were pertyneris
Of wynaryng and of lefyng, as men it ufe and doith,
And that they chaungit eyen, and yit this is fothe;
But the caufe of chaunging yit is to yow onknow,
Wher'fore I woll declare it both to high and lowe.
In that fame tyme that this burge fe blynd,
And my mafter Beryn, as faft as feyth myght bynde
Were marchaundis in comyn of al that they myght
Saff of lyf and lym, and of dedel fyn, [wyn,
Ther fill in the marchis of al thing fuch a derth
That joy, comfort, and folas, and al maner myrth;
Was exilid cleen, faff oonly moleftatioune,
That abood continuel—defperatioune:
So when that the pepil wer in moft myfcheffe
God that is above, that al thing doth releve,
Sent them fuch plente of mony, fruyte, and corn,
Wich turnid al to joy their mournyng al to forn;
Then gaf they them to mirth, revel, pley, and fong,
And thankid God above evir more among
Of their relevacioune from woo into gladnes,
For *Aftir four when fwete is com it is a plefant mes.*
So in the meen while of this profperite
Ther cam fuch a pleyer into the fame contre
That nevir thertofore was feyn fuch anothir,
That wele was the ereture that born was of his modir
That myght fe the mirthis of this jugeloure,
For of the world wide tho dayis he bare the flowre,
For there n'as man ne woman in that regioune,
That fet of hymfelf the ftore of a boton
Yf he had not fey his myrthis and his game.
So oppon a tyme this pleyer did proclame
That al manere of pepill his pleyis wold fe
Shuld com oppon a certen dey to the grete cete:
Then among othir my mafter here, Beryn,
And this fame blynd, that pledith now with hym,
Made a certen covenaunt that they wold fe
The mervellis of this pleyer and his fotilte:
So what for hete of fomer, age, and febilnes,
And eke alfo the long way, this blynd for wer rynes
Fill flat adown to the erth; o fete ne myght he gu;
Wher'for my mafter Beryn in hert was full woo,
And feyd, My frend, how now? mow ye no ferther pas?
No, he fayd, by hym that firft made mas;
And yit I had levir, as God my foule fave,
So thow wondir pleyis then all the good I have.
I cannat els, quod Beryn, but yf it may nat be
But that ye and I mut retourn age
Aftir ye be refreftid of your weryneff,
For to leve yew in this plite it wer no gentilnes.
Then feyd this blynd, I am avifid bet;
Beryn, ye fhull wend thidir without eny let,
And have myn eyen with yew that they the pleymow fe,
And I woll have yewrs tyll ye come age.
Thus was their covenaunt made, as I to yowre port,
For efe of this blynd, and moft for his comfort.
But wotith wele the whole fcience of all furgery
Was unyd or the chaunge was made of both eye
With many fotill enchantours and eke nygramanceere,
That fent were for the nonys maftris and fcoleris.
So when all was complete my maftir went his wey
With this mann'ys eyen and faw all the pley,

And haſtly retourned into that plaſe age,
And fond this blynd ſeching on hondis and on kne,
Graſping all aboute to fynd that he had lore,
Beryn his both e'en that he had tofore.
But as ſone as Beryn had pleyn knowleche
That his eyen were yloſt, unneth he myght areche
O word, for pure anguyſh that he toke ſodenly,
And from that day till nowe ne myght he nevir ſpy
This man in no plaſe ther law was ymevid;
But now in his preſence the ſoth is full yprevid,
That he ſhall make amendis or he hens pas
Right as the lawe wol deme, eſhir more or las;
For my maſtir'is eyen were betir and more clere
Then theſe that he hath now to ſe both fer and nere;
So wold he have his own, that proper were of kynd,
For he is evir redy to take to the blynde
The eyen that he had of hym, as covenaunt was,
So he woll do the ſame. Now, Soverens, in this
Ye mut take hede for to deme right, [caſe
For it wer no reſon my maſtir ſhuld leſe his ſight
For his trew hert and his gentilnes.
Beryn, quod the blind, tho I woll the releſe
My quarell and my cauſe, and fall fro my pleynt.
Thow mut nede, quod Geffrey, for thow art ateynt,
So mut thow profir gage, and borowis fynd alſo,
For to make amendis, as othir have ydo.
Sir Steward, do us law, ſith we deſire but right:
As we been peſe marchandis us longith nat to fight,
But pleyn us to the law, yf ſo we be agrevid.
Anoon opon that Geffrey theſe wordis had ymevid
The blynd man fond borowis for all his maletalent,
And were yentrid in the court to byde the jugement;
For thoughe that he blynde were yit had he good plente,
And more wold have wonne through his iniquite.
Now herith, Sirs, quod Geffrey: thre pleyntifs been aſſurid;
And as anenſt the ferth this woman hath arerid,
That pleynith here on Beryn, and ſeyth ſhe is his wyfe,
And that ſhe hath many a dey led a peynous lyfe,
And much ſorow endurid his child to ſuſtene,
And al is ſoth and trew. Now rightfullich to deme
Whether of them both ſhall othir obey,
And folowe will and luſtis, Sir Steward, ye mut ſey.
And therwith Geffrey lokid aſide on this woman
How ſhe chaungit colours, pale and eke wan.
All for nought, quod Geffrey, for ye mut with us go,
And endure with your huſbond both wele and woo;
And wold have take her by the hond, but ſhe awey did breyde,
And with grete ſighing theſe wordis ſhe ſeyd;
That ageyns Beryn ſhe wold plede no more,
But gagid with too borowis, as othir had do tofore.
The ſteward ſat as ſtill as who had ſhor his hede,
And ſpecially the pleyntifs were in mueh drede:
Geffrey ſet his wordis in ſuch maner wiſe
That wele they wiſt they myght nat ſcape in no wiſe
Without loſs of goodis for damage and for coſt,
For ſuch wer their lawis wher pleyntis wer yloſt.
Geffrey had full perfeyte of their encombirment,
And eke he was in certen that the jugement
Shuld pas with his maſtir; wherfor he anoon,
Sovern Sirs, he ſeyd, yit muſt we ſerthir goon,
And anſwere to this Machyn, that ſeith the knife is his
That found was on Beryn; ther'of he ſeith nat amys:
And for more preſe he ſeith in this manere
That here ſtondith preſent the ſame cotelere
That the knyfe made, and the precious ſtonys thre
Within the haſt been couchid, that in Cryſtyanite,
Thoughe men wold of purpoſe make ſerch and ſeche,
Men ſhuld nat fynd in al thing a knyfe that were it liche;
And more opyn preſe than maun'ys own knowleche
Men of law ne clerkis con nat tell ne teche.
Now ſith we be in this manere thus ferforth ago,
Then were ſpedfull for to know how Beryn cam firſt to
Have poſſeſſioune of the knyfe that Machyn ſeith is his:
To yew unknowne I ſhall enfourm the trowith as it is.
Now ſeven yere and paſſid, opon a Tuyſday
In the Paſſioun-week, when men leven pley,
And uſe mote devocioune, faſtyng, and preyer,
Then in othir tyme or ſeſon of the yere,
This Beryn's fadir erlich wold arife,
And barefote go to chirch to Godd'is ſerviſe,
And lay hymſelf aloon from his own wyfe,
In reverence of the tyme, and mending of his lyfe:
So on the ſame Tuyſda that I tofore nempt
This Beryn roſe and rayn hym, and to the chirch went,
And mervelid in his hert his fadir was nat there,
And homward went ageyn with drede and eke fere.
Into his fadir's chambir ſodenlich he rakid,
And fond hym ligg ſtan dede oppon the ſtraw al nakid,
And the clothis halid from the bed awey.
Out, alas! quod Beryn, that evir I ſaw this dey!
They meyne herd the noiſe, how Beryn cried alas,
And cam into the chambir al that therein was;
But the dole, and the ſorowe, and anguyſh, that was there
It va lith nat at this tyme to declare it here;

But Beryn had moſt of all, have ye no doute:
And anoon they ſerchid the body al aboute,
And fond this ſame knyſe, the poynt right at his hert.
Of Beryn's fadir, whoſe teres gan outſtert
When he drowth out the knyſe of his fadir's wound;
Then ſtandede I ſaw hym fall down to the ground
In ſight of the moſt part that beth with hym now here,
And they affermyd it for ſoth, as Geffrey did them lere:
And yit had I nevir ſuſpecioun from that day tyll noweth
Who ded that curſed dede, tyll Machyn with his moweth
Afore yew hath knowlechid that the knyſe is his;
So mut he nedis anſwer for his deth ywis.
When Macyhn had yherd all Geffrey's tale
He roſe of bench ſodenly with colour wan and pale,
And ſeyd onto Beryn, Sir, ageyn the
I woll plete no more, for it wer gret pete
To combir yew with actions that beth of nobill kynde.
Graunt mercy! Sir, quod Geffrey; but yit ye ſhull fynde
Borowis or ye pas, amendis for to make
For our undewe vexacioune, and gage alſo us take
In ſign of ſubmyſſioune for your injury,
As law woll and reſon, for we woll utterly
Procede tyll we have jugement finall;
And ther'for, Sir Steward, what that evir fall
Delay us no longer but gyve us jugement,
For triſtith ye noon othir but we be fullich bent
To Iſope for to wend, and in his high preſence
Reherce al our plees, and have his ſentence;
Then ſhull ye make fynys, and highlich be agrevid.
And as ſone as the ſteward herd thes wordis mevid,
Reſon, ryght, and law, ſeyd the ſteward tho,
Ye mut nedis have wher I woll or no;
And to preve my full wyll, or we ferther goon,
Quicklich he commaundit, and ſparid nevir oon,
24 burgeyſis in law beſt ylerid,
Reherſyng them the plees, and how Geffrey anſwerid,
And on lyf and lym, and forfetur of good,
And as they wold nat leſe the ball within their hood,
To draw a-part togidir, and by their all aſſent
Spare no man on lyve to gyve trew jugement.
And when thes 24 burgeyſis had yherd
The charge of the ſteward, right ſore they wer aſerd
To leſe ther own lyvis but they demed trowith;
And eke of their neybours they had grete rowith,
For they perſeyvid clerelich in the plee throughout
Their frendis had the wors ſide, ther'of they had no dout,
And yf we deme trewly they woll be ſore anoyid,
Yit it is betir then we be ſhamyd and diſtroyid.
And anoon they were accordit, and ſeyd with Beryn,
And demed every pleyntif to make a grete fyne
With Beryn, and hym ſubmyt hoolich to his grace
Body, good, and catell, for wrong and their treſpaſe;
So ferforth, tyll at laſt it was ſo bout ybore
That Beryn had the doubill good that he had tofore,
And wyth joy and myrth, wyth all his company,
He droughe hym to his ſhippis ward wyth ſong and melody.
The ſteward and the burgeyſe from the court bent
Into their own placis, and evir as they went
They talkid of the Romeyns, how ſotill they wer
To aray hym like a fole that for them ſhuld anſwer.
What vylith it, quod Hanybald, to angir or to curs?
And yit I am in certen I ſhall fare the wers
All the dayis of my lyfe for this day's pleding,
And ſo ſhal al the remnaunt; and their hondis wryng,
Both Syrophanes, and the blynd, the woman, and Machyn,
And be bet aviſid er they eftſon a pleyne,
And al othir perſonys wythyn this cete
Mell the les wyth Romeyns whils they here be;
For ſuch anothir folc was nevir yit yborn,
For he did naught ellis but evir with us ſcorn
Tyll he had us caught even by the ſhyn
With his ſotill wittis in our own grene.
Now woll I retourn to Beryn ageyn,
That of his grete lukir in hert was right feyne.
And ſo was all his meyne, as them ought wele,
That they wer ſo delyverid from turment like to hell,
And graciuſly relevid out of ther grete myſchef,
And yſet above in comfort and bouchef.
Now in ſoth, quod Beryn, it may nat be denied
N'ad Geffrey and his witt be we had be diſtroyid:
Ithanked be Almyghty God omnipotent
That for our conſolacioune Geffrey to us ſent!
And in proteſt openly, here among yew alle,
Half my good, whils that I lyve, whatevir me befall,
I graunt it here to Geffrey, to gyve or to ſell,
And nevir to part from me, yf it wer his wyl,
And fare as well as I a morrow and eke on eve,
And nevir for a man on lyve his company for to leve.
Graunt mercy! Sir, quod Geffrey, yewr profir is feir and grete,
But I deſire no more but as ye me behete,
To bryng me at Room, for this is covenaunte.
It ſhall be do, quod Beryn, and all the remnaunt.
Deperdeux! quod Geffrey, ther'of we ſhull wele do.
He ravid hym othirwiſe; and without wordis mo
They went to the dyner the hole company,
With pipis and wyth trompis, and othir melody.

And n the myddis of their mete gentil women fyve,
Maidens fresh atirid as myght be on lyve,
Com from the Duke Isope, lord of that rigioune,
Everich wyth a present, and that of grete renown:
The first bare a cup of gold, and of asure fyne,
So corouse and so nobill that I can nat devyne;
The second brought a sword yshethid, wyth seyntur
Ifretid all with perelis orient and pure;
The third had a mantell of lusty fresh colour,
The uttir part of purpill, yfurrid with pelour;
The ferth a cloth of gold, a worthy and a riche,
That nevir man tofere saw cloith it liche;
The fift bare a palme that stode tofore the deyse
In tokyn and sign of trowith and pese,
For that was the custom through all the contray;
The message was the levir and more plesant to pay.
The cup was uncoverid, the sword was out ybrayid,
The mantell was unfold, the cloth along ylayid;
They knelid adown echone right tofore Beryn;
The first did the message, that taught was wel and fyne:
Isope, she seyd, Sir Beryn, that is our lord riall,
And gretith yew, and sendith yew these presentis all,
And joy hath of yewr wisdom and of yewr governaunce,
And preyd you to com and have with hym plesaunce
To morowe, and se his palayse, and to sport you there,
Yee and all your company. Beryn made noon answere,
But sat styll, and beheld the women and the sondis;
And aftirward avisely the sword first he hondis
And commandit therewith all the wymmen wassh and sit,
And pryvelich chargit officers that with al their wit
To serve them of the best, and make them hertly chere
Ressevying al the presentis in worshipful manere.
I cannat wele express the joy that they had,
But I suppose tofore that day that they were nat so glad
That they wer so ascapid fortune and myschefe,
And thankid God above that al thing doith relefe;
For *Aftir mysty cloudis ther comith a cler sonne,*
So aftir hale comyth bete, whoso byde conne.
The joy and nobley that they had whils they wer at mete,
It vaylith nat at this tyme ther'of long to trete:
But Geffrey sat with Beryn, as he had servid wele;
Their hedis they leyd togidir, and begon to tell
In what maner the wymen shuld be answered.
Geffrey evir avisid Beryn ther'of he leryd,
And of othir thinges how he hym shuld govern;
Beryn sarerid wele theron, and fast he gan to lern.
When al wer up the wymmen cam to take their leve;
Beryn, as sat hym wele of blode, them toward gan releve,
And prey'd them hertly hym to recommend
Unto the worthy lordship of Isope, that you send
To me that am unworthy, save of his grete nobley,
And thank hym of his gyftis as ye can best, and sey,
To morow I woll be redy his hest to fulfill,
With this I have save condit I may com hym tyll,
For me and al my feleship saff to com and go,
Trusting in his discrecioune that thoughe I ax so
He wol nat be displesid; for in my contray
It hath evir be the custom, and is into this day,
That yf a lord riall desirith for to see
Eny maner persone that is of las degre,
Er he approche his presence he wol have in his honde
A saff condit enselid, or els som othir bonde,
That he may com and pas without disturbaunce;
Throughout all our marchis it is the observaunce,
Thes wymmen toke their leve without wordis mo,
Repeyring onto Isope, and al as it was do
They rehersid redely, and faylid nevir a word,
To Isope with his baronage ther he sat at his borde,
Talkyng fast of Romayns, and of their high prudence,
That in so many daungers made so wise defence.
But as sone as Isope had pleynlich yherd
Of Beryn's governaunce, that first sesid the sword
Afore al othir presentis, he demed in hys minde
That Beryn was ycom of som nobill kynde.
The nyght was past; the morowe cam; Isope had nat forgete;
He chargit barons twelf with Beryn for to mete
To cond hym saff and his meyne; and al perfourmyd was.
Thre dayis ther they sportid hym in myrth and solas,
That throughe the wise instructioune of Geffrey nyght and dey
Beryn plesid Isope with wordis al to pay,
And had hym so in port and in governaunce
Of all honest myrthis and witty daliaunce,
That Isope cast his chere to Beryn so groundly,
That at last ther was no man with Isope so pryvy,
Resorting to his shippis, comyng to and fro,
Thoroughe the wit of Geffrey, that eche day it fil so
That Isope coude no wher chere when Beryn was absent;
So Beryn must nedis eche day be aftir sent:
And chefe he was of counsell within the first yere,
Thoroughe the wit of Geffrey, that eche dey did hym lere.
This Isope had a doughtir betwene hym and his wyfe
That was as feir a creature as myght bere lyfe,
Wyse, and eke bountevouse, and benying with all,
That heir shuld be aftir his dey of his lordshippis alle;

So, ſhortly to conclude, the mariage was made
Betwene hir and Beryn, many a man to glade,
Saff the burgeyſis of the town, of falſhede that were rote:
But they wer evir hold ſo low ondir fote
That they might nat regne, but at laſt ſawe
To leve their condicioune and their fals lawe.
Beryn and Geffrey made them ſo tame
That they amendit eche dey; and gat a betir name.

Thus Geffrey made Beryn his enemyes to ovircom,
And brought hym to worſhip thoroughe his wyſdom.
Now God us graunt grace to fynde ſuch a frende
When we have nede! and thus I make an ende.

MISCELLANIES.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE*.

Many menne ſaine that in ſweveninges
Ther n'is but fables and leſinges,
But yet menne maie ſome ſwedin ſene
Whiche hardily that falſe ne bene,
But aftirwarde ben apparent,
This maie I drawin to warraunt.
An author that hight Macrobes,
That halte not dremis falſe ne leſe,
But undoth us the aviſioun
That whilom mette King Cipioun.
And who faith and weneth it be
A jape or els a nicete
To wene that dremis aſtir fal,
Let who ſo liſte a fole me cal;
For this trowe I, and ſay for me,
That dremis ſignifiaunce be
Of gude and harme to many wightes
That dremin in ther ſlepe a nightes
Full many things is covirtly
That fallin aftir opinly.

Within my twenty yere of age,
Whan that Love takith his corage
Of yongè folke, I wentè ſone
To bed, as I was wont to done,
And faſte I ſlepte, and in ſleping
Me mettè ſuche a ſwevining
That likid me wondirous wele,
But in that ſwevin' is ner a dele
That it n'is aftirwarde befal,
Right as this dreme wol tell us al,
Now this dreme wol I rime a right
To make your hertis gay and light;
For Love it prayith, and alſo
Commaundith me, that it be ſo.
And if there any aſkin me
Whether that it be he or ſhe,
And how this bokè whiche is here
Shal hate, which that I rede you here,
It is The Romaunt of the Roſe,
In which all The' Arte of Love I cloſe.
The matir faire is of to make,
God graunt in gre that ſhe it take
For whom that it begonnin is!
And that is ſhe that hath iwis
So mokil priſe, and therto ſhe
So worthy is beloved to be
That ſhe wel ought of priſe and right
Be clepid Roſe of every wight.
That it was Mey me thoughtin tho,
It is five yere or more ago,
That it was Mey thus dremid me,
In time of love and jolite,
That al thing ginnith waxin gay,
For there is neithir buſke nor hay
In Mey that it n'ill ſhroudid bene,
And it with newè levis wrene;

* This book was begun in French verſe by William de Lorris, and finiſhed forty years after by John Clopinell, alias John Moone, born at Mewen upon the river of Loyer, not far from Paris, as appeareth by Molinet the French author, upon the morality of The Romaunt, and afterward tranſlated, for the moſt part into Engliſh metre by Geoffrey Chaucer, but not finiſhed. It is intituled The Romaunt of the Roſe, or The Art of Love; wherein are ſhewed the helps and furtherances, as alſo the lets and impediments that lovers have in their ſuits. In this book the author hath many glances at the hypocriſy of the clergy, whereby he got himſelf ſuch hatred amongſt them that Gerſon Chancellor of Paris writeth thus of him: ſay'th he, There was one called Johannes Meldinenus who wrote a book called The Romaunt of the Roſe, which book if I only had, and that there were no more in the world, if I might have 500 pound for the ſame, I wold rather burn it than take the money. He ſaith more, that if he thought the author thereof did not repent him for that book before he dyed, he would vouchſafe to pray for him no more than he would for Judas that betrayed Chriſt. *Urry.*

Theſe wordis eke renoveren grene
That drie in winter ben to ſene,
And the erth wexith proud withall
For ſote dewis that on it fall,
And the povir eſtate forgette
In whiche that winter had it ſette,
And than becometh the grounde ſo proude
That it wol have a newe ſtroude,
And make ſo queint his robe and fayre,
That it had hewes an hundrid payre
Of graſſe and flouris lude and Pers,
And many hewis full divers,
That is the robe I mene iwis
Through whiche the ground to pranſin is.
The birdis that han left ther ſonge
While thei han ſuffrid colde ful ſtronge
In wethers grille and derke to ſight,
Ben in Mey for the ſunne bright
So glad, that they ſhewe in ſinging
That in ther herte is ſuche liking
That thei mote ſingin and ben light;
Than dothe the nightingale her might
To makin noiſe and ſingen blithe,
Than is bliſsful many a ſithe,
The chelandre' and the popingay,
Than yonge folke entenden aye
For to ben gaie and amorous,
The time is than ſo ſavorous.
Harde is his herte that lovith nought
In Mey, whan all this mirth is wrought,
Whan he may on theſe braunchis here
The ſmale birdis ſingin clere
Ther bliſsfull ſwete ſong pitous:
And in this ſeſon delitous,
Whan love affirmith alle thing,
Me thought one night, in my ſleping,
Right in my bed ful redily
That it was by the' morowe erly,
And up I roſe and gan me clothe;
Anon I wiſhe mine houdis lothe,
A ſilvir nedil forth I drowe
Out of aguiler queint inowe,
And gan this nidill threde ſmone,
For out of toune me lift to gone
The ſoune of briddis for to here
That on the buſkis ſingin clere,
In the ſwete ſeſon that leſe is,
With a thred lacing my ſlevis,
Alone I went in my playing,
The ſmale foulis ſonge herkening,
That painid'hem ful merry' a paire
To ſing on bowis bloſſomed faire;
Jolife and gaie, full of gladneſſe,
Towarde a river gan me dreſſe,
Which that I herde renne faſte by,
For fairir playin non ſaugh I
Than playin me by that rivere,
For from an hill that ſtode there nere
Come doune the ſtreme full ſtiffe and bold,
Clere was the watir, and as cold
As any welle is, ſothe to ſaine,
And ſomdele laſſe it was than Saine,
But it was ſtraitir, wele away,
And nevir ſaugh I er that daie
The watir that ſo wele liked me,
And wondir glad was I to ſe
That luſty place and that rivere:
With that watir that ran ſo clere
My face I waſhe, tho ſawe I wele
The botome ipavid everidele
With gravell, ful of ſtonis ſhene,
The medowis ſofte, ſote, and grene,
Beet right upon the watir ſide;
Ful clere was than the morowe tide,
And ful attempre out of drede;
Tho gan I walkin throwe the mede,
Downwarde evir in my playing
Nigh to the river's ſide coaſting.
And whan I had a while igone
I ſawe a garden right anone
Full long and brode, and everidele
Enclоſid was and wallid wele
With hie walis enbatailid,
Portrayed without, and well entayled
With many full riche portreitures,
And both the' imagis and peintures
Gan I beholdin beſily;
And I wol tel you redily
Of thilke imagis the ſemblaunce,
As ferre as I have remembraunce.
Amiddis ſawe I Hate ystonde,
That for her wrathe, and ire, and onde,
Semid to be a minoreſſe,
An angry wight, a chidireſſe,
And ful of gile and fell corage
By ſemblaunt was that ilke image,
And ſhe was nothing wele arraide,
But like a wode woman afraide;
Yfrouncid foule was her viſage,
And grinning for diſpitous rage;
Her noſe yſnorted up for tene,
Ful hidous was ſhe for to ſene;
Ful foule and ruſty was ſhe this;
Her hed iwrithin was iwis
Ful grimly with a grete towaile.
An image of another entaile
A liſte halfe was her faſt yby;
Her name above her hed ſawe I,
And ſhe was callid Felony.
Another' image, that Villany
Yclepid was, ſawe I alſo ſonde
Upon the wall on her right honde:
This Villany was like ſondele
That othre' image, and truſtith wele
She ſemid a wickid creture;
By countenaunce in portreiture
She ſemid be ful diſpitous,
And eke ful proude and outragious.
Wel coude he paint, I undertake,
That ſuch an image coude imake;
Ful foule and chorlich ſemid ſhe;
And eke villeinous for to be;
And litil could of noriture
To worſhippe any creature.
And nexte was painted Covetiſe,
That eggith folke in many' a giſe
To take and yeve right nought again,
And grete treſoure up to laine.

And that is ſhe that for uſure
Lenith to many a creture
The laſſe for the more winning,
So covitous is her brenning!
And that is ſhe for pennis ſele
That techith for to robbe and ſtele
Theſe thevis and theſe ſmale harlotes,
And that is routhe, for by ther throtes
Ful many one hongith at laſt;
She makith folke compaſſe and caſt
To takin othir folkis thing
Through robbery' or miſcoveting;
And that is ſhe that makith trechours,
And ſhe that makith falſe pledours,
That with ther termis and ther domes
Do maidins, childrin, and eke gromes,
Ther heritage, alas! forgo;
Ful crokid were her hondis two,
For Covetiſe is evir wode
To gripin othir folkis gode;
For Covetiſe for her winning
Ful leſe hath othir meanis thing.
Another image ſet faugh I
Next unto Covetiſe faſt by,
And ſhe was clepid Avarice:
Ful foule in painting was that vice,
Ful ſad and caitiſe was ſhe eke,
And alſo grene as any leke;
So evil hewed was her coloure
Her ſemed to' have livid in langoure;
She was like thing for hungir ded,
That lad her life onely by bred
Knedin with eiſel ſtrong and egre,
And therto ſhe was lene and megre;
And ſhe was clad ful povirly
Al in an oldè torne courtpye
As ſhe were all with doggis torne,
And bothe behinde and eke beforne
Ycloutid was ſhe beggirly.
A mantil honge her faſtè by
Upon a benche both weke and ſmale;
A burnette cote honge therè withal,
Yfurrid with no menivere,
But with a furrè rough of here
Of lambe ſkynnys hevy and blake;
It was full olde I undirtake,
For Avarice to clothe her wele
Ne haſſith her nevir adele,
For certainly it were her lothe
To werin of that ilkè clothe,
And if it were forwerid ſhe
Would havin full gret nicete
Of clothing er ſhe bought her newe,
Al were it bad of wol and hewe.
This Avarice helde in her hande
A purſe which that honge by a bande,
And that ſhe hid and bonde ſo ſtronge
Men muſt abidin wondir longe
Out of the purſe er there come ought,
For that ne comith in her thought;
It was not certaine her entent
That fro that purſe a peny went.
And by that image nigh inough
Was painted Envy, that nere lough,
Nor nevir wel in her hert ferde
But if ſhe either ſawe or herde
Some grete miſchaunce or grete diſeſe;
Nothing ne may ſo much her pleſe
As miſcheſe and miſaventure;
Or whan ſhe ſeeth diſcomfiture
Upon any worthy man falle,
Than likith her right well withall:
She is ful glad in her corage
Yf ſhe ſe any grete linage
Be brought to naught in ſhamſul wiſe;
And if a man in honour riſe
Or by his wit or his proweſſe,
Of that ſhe hath gret hevineſſe,
For truſtith wele ſhe goeth nie wode
Whan any chaunce yhapith gode.
Envy is of ſuche crueke
That faith ne trouth ne holdith ſhe
To frende ne felawe badde or gode;
Ne ſhe hath kinne none of her blode
That ſhe n'is ful ther enemy;
She n'olde, I dare ſaine hardily,
That her own fathir farid wele:
And ſore abieth ſhe every dele
Her malice and her male talent,
For ſhe is in ſo grete turment
And hate ſuche whan that folke doth gode
That nigh ſhe meltith for pure wode:
Her hert ſo kervith and ſo breketh
That God the peple wel a wreketh.
Envy I wis ſhall nevir let
Some blame upon the folke to ſet:
I trowe that if Envy i-wis
Yknew the beſtè man that is
On this ſide or beyond the ſe,
Yet ſomwhat lackin him wold ſhe;
And if he were ſo hende and wiſe
That ſhe ne might abate his priſe,
Yet would ſhe blame his worthineſſe,
Or by her wordis make it leſſe.
I ſawe Envy in that painting
Yhad a wondirful loking,
For ſhe ne lokid but awrie
Or ovirthwarte, all baggingly;
And ſhe had a full foule uſage,
She mightin loke in no viſage
Of man ne woman forth right plaine,
But ſhette her one eye for diſdaine;
So for envie ybrennid ſhe
Whan ſhe might any man yſe
That faire or worthy were or wiſe,
Or ellis ſtode in folkis priſe.
Sorowe was paintid next Envie
Upon that wal of maſonrie;
But wel was ſene in her colour
That ſhe had livid in langour;
Her ſemid to have the jaundice;
Not halfe ſo pale was Avarice,
Ne nothing alike of leneſſe,
For forowe, thought, and grete diſtreſſe,
That ſhe had ſuffrid day and night,
Made her yelowe, and nothing bright:
Ful ſade, pale, and megre, alſo,
Was nevir wighte yet halfe ſo wo

As that her ſemid for to be,
Nor ſo fulfilled with yre as ſhe;
I trow that no wight might her pleſe,
Nor do that thing that might her eſe;
Nor ſhe ne would her ſorowe ſlake,
Nor comfort none unto her take,
So depe ywas her wo begonne,
And eke her hert in angre ronne.
A ſorowful thing wel ſemid ſhe;
Nor ſhe had nothing ſlowe ybe
For to beſcratchin all her face,
And for to rent in many place
Her clothes, and for to tere her ſwire,
As ſhe that was fulfilled of ire;
And all to torne laie eke her here
About her ſhulders here and there,
As ſhe that had it all to rent
For angre and for male talent.
And eke I tell you certainly
How that ſhe wept full tendirly:
In worlde n'is wight ſo hard of herte,
That had yſene her ſorowes ſmerte,
That n'olde have had of her pite,
So wo begon a thing was ſhe.
She all to daſht her ſelf for wo,
And ſmote togidir her hondes two;
To Sorowe was ſhe full ententife,
That wofull rechileſſe caitife,
Her roughtè little of playing,
Or of clipping or of kiſſing,
For who ſo ſorowfull is in herte
Him luſtith not to plaie ne ſterte,
Nor for to dauncin ne to ſing,
Ne maie his herte in temper bring
To make joie on even or morowe,
For joie is contrary to ſorowe.
Elde was ypaintid after this,
That ſhortir was a fote i-wis
Than ſhe was wont in her yonghede;
Unneth her ſelf ſhe might yſede:
So feble and ſo olde was ſhe
That ſadid was all her beaute;
Full ſalowe was waxen her colour;
Her hedde for hore was white as flour;
I wis grete qualme ne were it none,
Ne ſinne, although her life were gone.
All woxin was her body' unwelde,
And drie and dwinid all for elde:
A foule forwelkid thing was ſhe,
That whilom round and ſoft had be:
Her beris ſhokin faſt withall,
As from her hedde they wouldin fall;
Her face yfrouncid and forpined,
And bothe her hondis lorne ſordwined:
So old ſhe was that ſhe ne went
A fote but it were by potent.
The time that paſſith night and daie,
And reſtileſſe travailith aie,
And ſtelith from us privily,
That to us ſemith ſikirly
That it in one poinct dwellith ever,
And certis it ne reſtith never,
But goeth ſo faſt and paſſith aie
That ther n'is man that thinkin maie
What timè that now preſent is,
Aſkith at theſe grete clerkis this;
For men thinkin it redily
Thre timis ben ypaſſid by
The timè that maie not ſojourne,
But goth and maie never retourne,
As watir that doune runnith aie,
But nevir droppe returnè maie.
There maie nothing as time endure,
Ne metall nor yerthly creture,
For allè thing is frette and ſhall,
The time eke that ychaungith all,
And all doeth waxe and foſtrid be,
And allè thing diſtroyith he;
The time that eldith our aunceſtours
And eldith kinges and emperours,
And that us all ſhall ovircomen,
Er that deth us ſhall have nommen,
The timè that hath all in welde
To elden folke had made her elde
So inly, that to my weting
She mightin helpe her ſelf nothing,
But tourned eyen unto childhede:
She had nothing her ſelf to lede,
Ne witte ne pithe within her hold,
More than a child of two yere old.
But nathèleſſe I trowe that ſhe
Was faire ſomtime and freſhe to ſe
Whan ſhe was in her rightfull age,
But ſhe was paſt all that paſſage,
And was a doted thing becomen:
A furrid cappe on had ſhe nommen;
Well had ſhe cladde her ſelf and warme,
For cold might els doin her harme:
Theſe old folke havin alwaie cold,
Ther kinde is ſoche whan thei ben old.
An othir thing was down there writc
That ſemid like an ipocrite,
And it was clepid Papelardie;
That ilke is ſhe that privilie
Ne ſparith ner a wicked dede
Whan men of her takin none hede,
And makith her outward precious
With palè viſage and pitous,
And ſemith a ſimple creture,
But there n'is no miſaventure
That ſhe ne thinketh in her corage:
Full like to her was thilke image
That makid was like her ſemblaunce,
She was full ſimple' of countenaunce;
And ſhe was clothid and eke ſhod
As ſhe were for the love of God,
Yholdin to religion,
Soche ſemid her devocion.
A ſpaltir helde ſhe faſt in honde,
And buſily ſhe gan to ſonde
To make many a faint praiere
To God and to his ſainctis dere:
Ne ſhe was gaie, freſhe, ne jolife,
But ſemed to be full ententife
To godè werkis and to faire,
And therto ſhe had on an haire.
Ne certis ſhe was fatte nothing,
But ſemid werie for faſting:

Of colour pale and dede was ſhe;
From her the gates aie warnid be
Of Paradiſe, that bliſsfull place,
For ſoche folke makin lene ther grace,
As Chriſt ſaieth in his Evangile,
To get 'hem priſe in toune a while,
And for a little glory veigne
Thei leiſin God and eke his reigne.
And aldir laſt of everichone
Was painted Poverte' all alone,
That not a penny had in hold,
Although that ſhe her clothis ſold,
And though ſhe ſhold an hongid be,
For nakid as a worme was ſhe,
And if the wether ſtormy were
For cold ſhe ſhold have dyid there.
She ne' had on but a ſtraite old ſacke,
And many' a cloute on it there ſtacke;
This was her cote and her mantele;
No more was there nevir a dele
To clothe her with; I undirtake
Grete leſir haddè ſhe to quake:
And ſhe was put that I of talke
Ferre fro theſe othre, up in an halke;
There lurkid and there courid ſhe,
For povir thing, where ſo it be,
Is ſhameſaſt and diſpiſid aie:
A curſid male well be that daie
That povir man conceived is,
For God wote all to ſelde i-wis
Is any pore man well iſed,
Or well arayid or icled,
Or well belovid, in ſoche wiſe
In honour that he maie ariſe.
Allè theſe thingis well aviſed,
As I have you er this deviſed,
With gold and aſure ovir all
Depaintid were upon the wall:
Square was the wall, and high ſomdele,
Encloſid and ibarrid wele
In ſtede of hegge was that gardin,
Came nevir no ſhepherd therein:
Into that gardin well ywrought
Who ſo that me coud have ybrought
By ladders, or els by degre,
It wouldè well have likid me;
For ſoche ſolace, ſoche joie and pleie,
I trowe that nevir man ne ſeie
As was in that place delicious:
The gardin was not daungerous
To herborowe birdes many one;
So riche a yere was nevir none
Of birdis ſong and braunchis grene,
Therin were birdis mo I wene
Than ben in all the relme of Fraunce;
Full bliſsfull was the accordaunce
Of the ſwete petous ſong thei made,
For all this worlde it ought to glade.
And I my ſelf ſo mery ferde,
Whan I ther bliſsfull ſongis herde,
That for an hundrid pounde would I,
If that the paſſage opinly
Haddin ybe unto me fre,
That I n'oldè entrin for to ſe
Th' aſſemble (God kepe it fro care!)
Of birdis whiche that therein ware,
That ſongin through ther mery throte
Dauncis of love and mery notes.
Whan I thus herd the ſoulis ſing,
I fell faſt in a waimenting
By whiche art or by what engin
I might com into that gardin;
But waie I couthe ne findin none
Into that gardin for to gone,
Ne nought wiſt I if that there were
Eithir a hole or a place where
By whiche I mightin have entre;
Ne there was none to techin me,
For I was all alone i-wis,
For wo and for anguiſſe of this,
Till at the laſte bethought I me
That by no waie ne might it be,
There n'as ladder ne waie to pace,
Or hole, into ſo faire a place;
Tho gan I go a full grete pace
Environ, evin in compas,
The cloſing of the ſquarè wall,
Till that I founde a wicket ſmall
So ſhette that I ne might in gone,
And othir entre was there none.
Upon this dore I gan to ſmite
That was ſo ſetis and ſo lite,
For othir waie coud I not ſeke.
Full long I ſhofe and knockid eke,
And ſtode full long all herkining
If I herd any wight coming,
Till that the dore of thilke entre
A maidin curteis opened me:
Her here was as yelowe of hewe
As any baſin ſcourid newe;
Her fleſhe tendir as is a chike,
With bent browis both ſmothe and ſlike;
And thereto by meſure large were
The opening of her eyen clere;
Her noſe of gode proporcion;
Her eyen graie as is a faucon;
With ſwetè breth and wel favoured;
Her facè white and well coloured;
With little mouthe and round to ſe;
A clovin chinnè eke had ſhe;
Her necke was of gode faſhion,
In length and gretneſſe by reſon,
Withoutin bleine, or ſcabbe, or roine;
Fro Hieruſalem' to Burgoine
There n'is a fairer necke i-wis
To fele how ſmothe and ſoft it is;
Her throte alſo ſo white of hewe
As ſnowe on braunche yſnowid newe;
Of body full well wrought was ſhe,
Men nedin not in no countre
A fairer bodie for to ſeke;
And of fine orfrais had ſhe eke
A chapilet, ſo ſemely on
Ne nevir werid maide upon;
And faire above than chapilet
A roſe garlande had ſhe yſet;
She had alſo a gaie mirrour;
And with a richè golde treſour

Her hedde was treſſid full queintly;
Her ſlevis ſowed ſetously;
And for to kepe her hondis faire
Of glovis white ſhe had a paire;
And ſhe had on a cote of grene
Of cloth of Gaunt withoutin wene:
Well ſemid by her aparaille
She was not wont to grete travaile,
For whan ſhe kempt was fetously,
And well araied and richily,
Than had ſhe doen all her journe,
For mery' and well begon was ſhe.
She had a luſtie life in Maie;
She had no thought by night ne daie
Of nothing but it were onely
To graieth her well and uncouthly.
Whan that this dore had opened me
This maidin ſemely for to ſe,
I thonkid her as I beſt might,
And aſkid her how that ſhe highte,
And what ſhe was I aſked eke?
And ſhe to me was nought unmeke,
Ne of her anſwere daungerous,
But faire anſwerde, and ſayid thus:
Lo, Sir, my name is Idilneſſe,
So clepen men me more and leſſe:
Ful mightie and ful riche am I,
And that of one thing, namily,
For I entending to no thing
But to my joie and my playing,
And for to kembe and treſſe me:
Acquainted am I and prive
With Mirthe, the lorde of this gardin,
That fro the' londe of Alexandrian
Made the treis hithir be fet
That in his gardin ben iſet;
And whan the trees were woxe on highte
This wall, that ſtant here in thy ſight,
Did Mirthe encloſin all about;
And theſe imagis all without
He did 'hem bothe entraile and paint
That neither ben joliſe ne quaint,
But thei ben full of ſorowe and wo,
As thou haſt ſene a while ago.

And oft timis him to ſolace
Sir Mirthe comith into this place,
And eke with him come his meine,
That liven' in luſt and jolite;
And now is Mirthe thorein, to here
The birdis how they ſingin clere,
The mavis and the nightingale,
And othir joly birdis ſmale;
And thus he walkith to ſolace
Him and his folke, for ſwettir place
To playin in he maie not finde
Although he ſought one in till Inde;
The althir faireſt folk to ſe
That in this worlde maie founde ybe
Hath Sir Mirthe with him in his rout,
That folowen him alwaies about.
Whan Idilneſſe had tolde all this,
And I had herkened well i-wis,
Than ſaied I to Dame Idilneſſe,
Now all ſo wiſely God me bleſſe,
Sith Mirthe, that is ſo faire and fre,
Is in this yerd with his meine,
Fro thilke aſſemble if I maie
Shall no man werne me to daie,
That I this night ne mote it ſe,
For well wene I there with him be
A faire and joliſe compaignie
Fulfillid of all curtiſie.
And forth withoutin wordis mo
In at the wicket went I tho
That Idilneſſe had opened me
Into that gardin faire to ſe:
And whan that I was in i-wis
Mine hertè was full glad of this,
For well wende I full ſikirly
Have ben in Paradiſe yerthly,
So faire it was, that truſtith well
It ſemed a place eſpirituell;
For certis as at my diviſe
There is no place in Paradiſe
So gode in for to dwell or be
As in that gardin thoughtin me;
For there was many' a birde ſinging,
Thoroughout the yerde all thringing,
In many placis nightingales,
And alpes, and finches, and wodewales,
That in ther ſwetè ſong deliten
In thilke places as thei habiten.
There mightin men ſe many flockes
Of turtels and of lavercockes,
Chalaundris ſele yſawe I there,
That very nigh forſongin were,
And thruſtils, terins, and maviſe,
That ſongin for to winne 'hem priſe,
And eke to ſurmount in ther ſong
That othir birdis 'hem emong;
By note ymadin faire ſerviſe
Theſe birdis that I you deviſe;
Thei ſong their ſong as faire and wele
As angels doen eſpirituell;
And truſtith me whan I 'hem herde
Full luſtie and full well I ferde,
For nevir yet ſoche melodie
Was herd of man that mightin die,
Soche ſwete ſong as was 'hem emong,
That me thought it no bird'is ſong,
But it was wondir like to be
Song of meremaidens of the ſe,
That for her ſinging is ſo clere;
Though we Meremaidens clepe 'hem here
In Engliſhe, as is our uſance,
Men clepin 'hem Sereins in Fraunce.

Ententife werin for to ſing
Theſe birdis, that not unkonning
Were of ther craft and a prentiſe,
But of ſong ſubtill and eke wiſe;
And certis whan I herd ther ſong,
And ſawe the grene place emong,
In hert I went ſo wondir gale
That I was nevir er that daie

So jolife nor ſo well bigo,
Ne mery' in herte as I was tho;
And than wiſt I and ſawe full well
That Idilneſſe me ſervid well,
That me put in ſoche jolite:
Her frende well ought I for to be
Sithe ſhe the dore of that gardin
Had opinid and let me in.
From hennis-forthe how that I wrought
I ſhall you tellen as me thought.
Firſt whereof Mirthe yſervid there,
And eke what folke there with him were,
Without fable I woll diſcrive,
And alle that gardin eke as blive;
I woll you tellen aftir this
The faire faſſion all i-wis
That well ywrought was for the nones;
I mai not tell you all at ones,
But as I mai and can I ſhall
By order tellin you it all.
Full faire ſervice, and eke full ſwete,
Theſe birdis madin as thei ſete;
Layis of love full well ſouning
Thei ſongin in ther jargoning;
Some hie and ſome eke lowe yſong
Upon the braunchis grene iſprong;
The ſwetneſſe of ther melodie
Made all mine herte in revelrie.
And whan that I had herd I trowe
Theſe birdis ſinging on a rowe,
Than might I not withholdin me
That I ne went in for to ſe
Sir Mirthe, for all my deſiring
Was him to ſene ovir all thing;
His countenaunce and his manere
That ſight was unto me full dere.

Tho wente I forthe on my right honde,
Doune by a little pathe I fonde
Of mintis full and fenell grene;
As faſtè by withoutin wene
Sir Mirthe I founde, and right anon
Unto Sir Mirthe gan I to gon,
Ther as he was him to ſolace;
And with him in that luſtie place
So faire folke and ſo freſhe had he
That whan I ſawe I wondrid me
Fro whennis ſoche folke mightin come,
So faire thei werin all and ſome,
For thei weren like, as to my ſight,
To angels that ben ſethered bright.
Theſe folke, of whiche I tell you ſo,
Upon a karole wentin tho;
A ladie karoled 'hem that hight
Gladneſſe, the bliſsfull and the light;
Well could ſhe ſing and luſtily,
None halfe ſo well and ſemily,
And cothe make in ſong ſoche refraining
It ſate her wondir well to ſing:
Her voice full clere was and full ſwete;
She was not rude ne yet unmete,
But couthe inoughe for ſoche doing
As longith unto karolling,
For ſhe was wonte in every place
To ſingin firſt folke to ſolace,
For ſinging moſte ſhe gave her to;
No craſte had ſhe ſo leſe to doe.

Tho mightiſt thou karollis ſene,
And folkè daunce and merie ben,
And made many a faire tourning
Upon the grenè graſſe ſpringing:
There mightiſt thou ſe theſe ſlutours,
Minſtrallis and eke jogèlours,
That wel to ſingin did ther paine:
Some ſongin ſongis of Loraine,
For in Loraine ther notis be
Full ſwetir than in this contre.
There was many a timbeſtere,
And ſailours, that I dare wel ſwere
Ycothe ther craft full parfitly;
The timbris up full ſubtilly
Thei caſtin, and hent them full oft
Upon a fingir faire and ſoft,
That thei ne fallid nevir mo.
Full fetis damoſellis two,
Right yong, and full of ſemelyhede,
In kirtils and none othir wede:
And faire ytreſſid every treſſe
Had Mirthe ydoen for his nobleſſe
Amidde the carole for to daunce.
But hereof lieth no remembraunce
How that thei daunſid queintely,
That one would come all privily
Ayen that othre', and whan thei were
Togithre' almoſte thei threwe ifere
Ther mouthis ſo, that through ther plaie
It ſemid as thei kiſt alwaie:
To dauncen well couthe thei the giſe;
What ſhould I more to you deviſe?
Ne bode I nevir thennis go
Whiles that I ſawe 'hem dauncin ſo.
Upon the karoll wondir faſt
I gan beholde, till at the laſt
A ladie gan me for to' eſpie,
And ſhe was clepid Curteſie,
The worſhipfull, the debonaire;
I praie to God er fall her faire!
Full curtiſly ſhe callid me,
What do you there, Beau Sire? (quod ſhe)
Comith, and if it likith you
To dauncin, daunſith with us now.
And I withoutin tarying
Ywent into the caroling:
I was abaſhid ner a dele,
But it to me likid right wele
That Curteſie me clepid ſo,
And bade me on the daunce ygo,
For if I haddè durſt certain
I would have karollid right fain,
As man that was to daunce right blithe:
Than gan I lokin oftè ſithe
The ſhape, the bodies, and the cheres,
The countenaunce, and the maneres,
Of all the folke that dauncid there,
And I ſhall tellin what thei were.

Full faire was Mirth, full longe and high,
A fairer man I nevir ſigh:
As round as aple was his face,
Full roddie' and white in every place;
Fetis he was and well beſeie,
With metely mouthe, and eyin greie;
His noſe by meſure wrought full right;
Criſpe was his here, and eke full bright;
His ſhulderis of largè brede,
And ſmalifhe in the girdelſtede;
He ſemid like a purtreiture,
So noble' he was of his ſtature,
So faire, ſo jolie', and ſo fetiſe,
With limmis wrought at poinct deviſe,
Deliver, ſmerte, and of grete might,
Ne ſawe thou nevir man ſo light;
Of berde unneth had he nothing,
For it was in the firſtè ſpring;
Full yong he was, and merie' of thought,
And in ſamette with birdis wrought;
And with golde bete full fetouſly
His bodie was clad full richely;
Wrought was his robe in ſtraungè giſe,
And all to ſlittered for queintiſe
In many a place, lowe and hie;
And ſhode he was with grete maiſtrie
With ſhone decopid, and with lace,
By drurie and eke by ſolace;
His leſe a roſin chapilet
Had made, and on his hedde it ſet.
And wetin ye who was his leſe?
Dame Gladdeſſe there was him ſo leſe,
That ſingeth ſo well with glad corage,
That from ſhe was twelve yere of age
She of her love graunt to him made:
Sir Mirthe her by the fingir hade
A dauncing, and ſhe him alſo;
Grete love there was a twix 'hem two;
Bothe were thei faire and bright of hewe;
She ſemid like a roſè newe
Of colours, and her fleſhe ſo tender,
That with a brerè ſmale and tender
Men might it cleve, I dare well ſain;
Her forhedde frounciles all plain;
Bent werin her eye-browis two;
Her eyin graie, and glad alſo,
That laughdin aie in her ſemblaunt
Firſt or the mouthe by covenaunt;
I n'ot what of her noſe diſcrive,
So faire hath no woman alive;
Her here was yelowe', and clere ſhining;
I wot no lady ſo liking.
Of orfraies freſhe was her garlande;
I, whiche that ſene have a thouſande,
Sawe ner i-wis no garlande yet
So well ywrought of ſilke as it;
And in an ovir gilt ſamite
Ycladde ſhe was by grete delite,
Of whiche her leſe a robe ywerde;
The merier ſhe in herte ſerde.
Next her went, on her othir ſide,
The god of Love, that can devide
Love, and as him liketh it be;
But he can cherlis dauntin, he;
And many folkis pridè fallen,
And he can well theſe lordis thrallen,
And ladies put at lowe degre,
When he maie 'hem to proude yſe.
This god of Love of his faſcion
Was like no knave ne no quiſtron:
His beutie gretely was to priſe,
But of his robis to deviſe
I drede encombrid for to be,
For not icladde in ſilk was he,
But all in flouris and flourettes,
Ipainted all with amorettes,
And with loſingis and ſcochons,
With birdis, liberdes, and lions,
And othir beſtis wrought full wele;
His garment was evèry dele
Ipurtraied and iwrought with floures,
By divers medeling of coloures;
Flouris there were of many giſe
Iſet by compace in a ſiſe;
There lackid no oflure to my dome,
Ne not ſo much as floure of brome,
Ne violet, ne eke pervinke,
Ne floure none that men can on thinke;
And many a roſe leſe full long
Was entermedlid there emong;
And alſo on his hedde was ſet
Of roſes redde a chapilet.
But nightingales a full grete rout,
That flien ovir his hedde about,
The levis feldin as thei flien,
And he was all with birdis wrien,
With popingaie, with nightingale,
With chalaundre and with wodewale,
With finche, with larke, and with archangel;
He ſemid as he were an angell
That doun were come fro hevin clere.
Love had with him a bachilere
That he made alwaies with him be,
And Swete Loking cleped was he.
This bachilere ſtode beholding
The daunce, and in his honde holding
Turke bowes two, well deviſed, had he;
That one of 'hem was of a tre
That berith fruict of favour wicke;
Full crokid was that foulè ſticke,
And knottie here and there alſo,
And blacke as berie' or any ſlo.
That othir bowe was of a plant
Withoutin wemme I dare warant
Full even and by proporcion
Tretis and long, and of gode facion,
And it was paintid well and thwitten,
And ore all diaprid and written
With ladies and with bachileres
Full lightſome and full glad of cheres.
Theſe bowis two held Swete Loking,
That ne ſemid like no gadling,
And ten brode arowes held he there,
Of whiche five in his hondè were,
But thei were ſhavin well and dight,
Nockid and fetherid a right.
And all thei were with golde begon,
And ſtrong ypoinctid everichon,

And ſharpe for to ykervin wele,
But iron was there none ne ſtele,
For all was golde, men might it ſe,
Out take the ſethers and the tre.

The ſwifteſt of theſe arowes five
Out of a bowè for to drive,
And the beſt fethered for to flie,
And faireſt eke, was cleped Beutie.
That othir arowe, that hurteth leſſe,
Was clepid (as I.trowe) Simpleſſe.
The thirde yclepid was Fraunchiſe,
That fethered was in noble wiſe
With valour and with curtiſie.
The fowerth was clepid Companie,
That hevie for to ſhotin is,
But who ſo ſhotith right i-wis
Maie therwith doen grete harme and wo.
The fift of theſe, and laſte alſo,
Faire Semblaunt men that arowe call;
'Tis the leſſe grevous of 'hem all,
Yet can it make a full grete wounde,
But he maie hope his ſoris ſounde
That hurte is with that arowe' i-wis;
His wo the bette beſtowid is
For he maie ſoner have gladneſſe;
His languor ought to be the leſſe.

Five arowes were of othir giſe
That ben full foule for to deviſe,
For ſhaft and ende, ſothe for to tell,
Were all ſo blacke as fende in hell.
The firſt of 'hem is callid Pride;
That othre' arowe next him beſide
It was yclepid Vilanie;
That arrowe was with felonie
Envenimed, and with ſpitous blame:
The third of 'hem was clepid Shame;
The fowerth Wanhope yclepid is;
The fift the Newè Thought iwis.
Theſe arowes that I ſpeke of here
Werin all five on one manere,
And all were thei reſemblable;
To them was well fitting and able
The foulè crokid bowe hidous
That knottie was and all roinous:
That bowe yſemid well to ſhete
The arowes five that ben unmete
And contrary to that othir five;
But though I tellin not as blive
Of ther powir ne of ther might,
Hereaftir ſhall I tellin right
The ſothe and eke ſignifiaunce,
As ferre as I have remembraunce
All ſhall be ſaied I undirtake
Er of this boke an ende I make.
Now come I to my tale againe;
But aldirfirſt I woll you ſaine
The faſhion and the countenaunces
Of alle the folke that on the daunce is.
The god of Love, jolife and light,
Ladde on his honde a ladie bright,

Of high priſe and of grete degre,
This ladie callid was Beutie;
And an arowe of whiche I tolde
Full well ythewid was ſhe holde;
Ne ſhe was derke ne broune, but bright
And clere as is the mone light,
Again whom all the ſterris ſemen
But ſmall candelis as we demen;
Her fleſhe was tendre' as dewe of floure;
Her chere was ſimple' as birde in boure,
As white as lilie' or roſe in riſe;
Her face was gentill and tretiſe;
Fetis ſhe was, and ſmale to ſe;
No wintrid browis haddè ſhe,
Ne popped here, for it nedid nought
To windir her or to paint ought;
Her treſſes yelowe, and long ſtraughten,
Unto her heles doune thei raughten;
Her noſe, her mouthe, and eye, and cheke,
Well wrought, and all the remnaunte eke;
A full grete ſavour and a ſote
Me thoughtin mine hertè rote,
As helpe me God, whan I remember
Of the faſhion of every member:
In worlde is none ſo faire a wight,
For yong ſhe was, and hewid bright
Sore pleſaunt, and fetis with all,
And gent and in her middle ſmall.
Beſidè Beute yede Richeſſe,
And hight ladie of grete nobleſſe,
And grete of price in every place;
But who ſo durſt to her treſpace,
Or till her folke, in werkis or dede,
He were ful hardie out of drede,
For bothe ſhe helpe and hindir maie;
And that is not of yeſterdaie
That riche folke havin full grete might
To helpe and eke to greve a wight.
The beſt and gretiſt of valour
Diddin Richeſſe full grete honour,
And buſie werin her to ſerve,
For that thei would her love deſerve;
Thei cleped her Ladie grete and ſmall;
This widè worlde her dredith all,
This worlde is all in her daungere;
Her courte hath many' a loſingere,
And many' a traitour envious,
That ben full buſie' and curious
For to diſpreiſin and to blame
That beſt deſervin love and name;
To forne the folke 'hem to begilen
Theſe loſengeours 'hem priſe and ſmilen.
And thus the worlde with worde anointen,
Bot aftirward thei prill and poincten
The folke right to the barè bone
Behinde ther backe whan thei ben gone,
And foule abatin folkis priſe:
Full many' a worthie man and wiſe
Han hindrid and idoen to die
Theſe loſingeours with ther flatt'erie,
And makith folke full ſtraungè be
There as 'hem ought to ben prive:
Well evill mot thei thrive,
And evill arived mote thei be,

Theſe loſingeours full of envie;
No gode man loveth ther companie.
Richeſſe a robe of purple' on had,
Ne trowe not that I lie or mad,
For in this world is none it liche,
Ne by a thouſande dele ſo riche,
Ne none ſo faire, for it full wele
With orfreis laied was every dele,
And purtraied in the ribaninges
Of dukis ſtories and of kinges,
And with a bend of golde taſſiled,
And knoppis fine of golde amiled:
About her necke of gentle' entaile
Was ſhet the riche cheveſaile,
In whiche there was full grete plente
Of ſtonis clere and faire to ſe.
Richeſſe a girdle had upon,
The bokill of it was of ſton
Of vertue grete and mokil might,
For who ſo bare the ſtone ſo bright
Of venim durſt him nothing douht
While he the ſtone had him about;
That ſtone was gretely for to love,
And till a riche mann'is behove
Worth all the golde in Rome and Friſe;
The mourdaunt, wrought in noble giſe,
Was of a ſtone full precious,
That was ſo fine and vertuous
That whole a man it couth ymake
Of palſie and of the tothe ake,
And yet the ſtone had ſoche a grace
That he was ſikre' in every place
All thilkè daie not blinde to ben
That faſting might that ſtonè ſene;
The barris were of gold full fine,
Upon a tiſſue of ſatin;
Full hevie, grete, and nothing light,
In everiche was a beſaunt wight.
Upon the treſſis of Richeſſe
Was ſet a circle of nobleſſe
Of brende golde, that ful light yſhone,
So faire trowe I was nevir none:
But he were konning for the nones
That could deviſin all the ſtones
That in that circle ſhewin clere;
It is a wondir thing to here,
For no man could or preiſe or geſſe
Of 'hem the value or richeſſe:
Rubies there were, ſaphirs, ragounces,
And emeraudes, more than two unces,
But all before full ſubtilly
A fine carboncle ſet ſawe I,
The ſtone ſo clere was and ſo bright,
That all ſo ſone as it was night
Men mightin ſene to go for nede
A mile or two in length and brede;
Soche light yſprang out of the ſtone
That Richeſſe wondir bright yſhone
Bothe on her hedde and all her face,
And eke about her all the place.
Dame Richeſſe on her honde gan lede
A yong man ful of ſemelyhede
That ſhe beſt loved of any thing;
His luſt was moche in houſholding;
In clothing was he full ſetiſe,
And loved well to have hors of priſe;
He wende to have reprovid be
Of theft or murder if that he
Had in his ſtable an hackenaie,
And therfore he deſirid aie
To ben aqueintid with Richeſſe,
For all his purpoſe, as I geſſe,
Was for to makin grete diſpence
Withoutin warning or defence.
And Richeſſe might it well ſuſtain,
And her diſpences wele maintain,
And him alwaie ſoche plentie ſende
Of golde and ſilvir for to ſpende
Withoutin lacking or daungere
As it were pourde in a garnere.
And aftir on the daunce went
Largeſſe, that ſet all her entent
For to ben honourable' and fre;
Of Alexander's kinne was ſhe;
Her moſte joie it was i-wis
Whan that ſhe yaſe, and ſaied, Have this;
Not Avarice, the foule caitiſe,
Was halfe to gripe ſo ententiſe
As Largeſſe is to yeve and ſpende,
And God alwaie inowe her ſende!
So that the more ſhe yave awaie,
The more i-wis ſhe had alwaie,
Grete loos hath Largeſſe, and grete priſe,
For bothe the wiſe folke and unwiſe
Were wholy to her bandon brought,
So well with yeftis hath ſhe wrought.
And if ſhe had an enemie
I trowe that ſhe couth craftily
Make him full ſone her frende to be,
So large of yeftes and wiſe was ſhe;
Therfore ſhe ſtode in love and grace
Of riche and pore in every place.
A full grete fole is he i-wis
That riche, and pore, and nigard is.
A lorde maie have no manir vice
That grevith more than avarice;
For nigarde ner with ſtrength of hande
Maie winne him grete lordſhipe or lande,
For frendis all to fewe hath he
To doen his will performid be;
And whoſo woll have frendis here
He maie not holde his treſour dere;
For by enſample tell I this,
Right as an adamant i-wis
Can drawin to him ſubtilly
The iron that is laied therby,
So drawith folkis hertes i-wis
Silvir and golde that yevin is.
Largeſſe had on a robè freſhe
Of richè purpure farliniſhe:
Well formid was her face and clere,
And opened had ſhe her colere,
For ſhe right there had in preſent
Unto a lady made preſent
Of a gold broche ful wel ywrought,
And certis it miſſate her nought,
For through her ſmocke ywrought with ſilke
The ſleſhe was ſene as white as milke,

Largeſſe, that worthy was and wiſe,
Helde by the honde a knight of priſe
Was ſibbe to Arthour of Breteigne,
And that was he that bare the' enſeigne
Of worſhip and the gonfannoun;
And yet he is of ſuche renoun
That menne of him ſay faire thinges
Before barons, and erles, and kinges.
This knight was comin al newly
Fro tourneying there faſtè by,
Where he had done grete chivalry
Through his vertue and his maiſtrie,
And for the love of his lemman
He caſte doune many a doughty man.
And next him dauncid Dame Franchiſe,
Arayid in ful noble giſe:
She n'as not broune ne donne of hewe,
But white as ſnowe ifallin newe;
Her noſe was wrought at point deviſe,
For it was gentill and tretiſe;
With eyin glad, and browis bent;
Her here doune to her helis went;
And ſhe was ſimple' as dove on tre;
Ful debonaire of hert was ſhe.
She durſtè neither ſay ne do
But that that hir belongith to;
And if a manne were in diſtreſſe,
And for her love in hevineſſe,
Her hert would have full grete pite,
She was ſo amiable and fre;
For were a manne for her beſtadde
She wouldè ben right ſore a dradde
That ſhe did ovir gret outrage;
But ſhe him holpe his harme t'aſwage
Her thought it all a vilanie:
And ſhe had on a fuckiny
That not of hempè herdis was,
So faire was non in all Arras;
Lorde! it was riddeled fetiſly;
There ne was not a point truely
That it n'as in his right aſſiſe:
Ful wel iclothid was Fraunchiſe,
For there n'is no clothe ſitteth bette
On damoſell than doth rokette;
A woman wel more ſetiſe is
In rokette than in cote i-wis;
The white rokette riddilid faire
Betokenith that full debonaire
And ſwete was ſhe that it ybere.
By her dauncid a bachelere,
I can not tell you what he hight,
But faire he was and of gode hight,
Al had he ben, I ſaie no more,
The lord'is ſonne of Windèſore.
And next that dauncid Curtiſy,
That preiſed was of lowe and hie,
For nethir proude ne fole was ſhe;
She for to daunce callid me;
I praie God give to her gode grace!
For whan I come firſt to the place
She n'as not nice ne outrageous,
But wiſe and ware, and vertuous,
Of faire ſpeche, and of faire anſwere;
Was nevir wight miſſaide of here;
She bare no rancour to no wight;
Clere broune ſhe was, and therto bright
Of face, and body avenaunt;
I wotte no lady ſo pleſaunt:
She werin worthy for to bene
An empèreſſe or crounid quene.
And by her went a knight dauncing
That worthy was and wel ſpeking,
And ful wel coude he don honour:
The knight was faire and ſtiffe in ſtour,
And in armure a ſemely man,
And wel beloved of his lemman.
Faire Idilneſſe than nexte ſaugh I,
That alway was me faſtè by:
Of her have I withoutin faile
Tolde you the ſhape and appareile,
For, (as I ſaid) lo! that was ſhe
That did to me ſo grete bounte;
She me the gate of that gardin
Undid, and let me paſſin in,
And aftir dauncid, as I geſſe.
And ſhe fulfilled of luſtineſſè
That n'as not yet twelve yere of age,
With hertè wilde and thought volage:
Nice ſhe ywas, but ſhe ne mente
None harme ne ſleight in her entente,
But onely luſte and jolite,
(For yongè folke, wel wetin ye,
Have litill thought but on ther play:)
Her lemman was beſide alway
In ſuche a giſe that he her kiſte
At allè timis that him liſte,
That al the dauncè might it ſe;
They make no force of privite,
For who ſpake of 'hem ill or wele
Thei were aſhamid nere a dele,
But men might ſene 'hem kiſſe there
As though it two yonge dovis were;
For yonge was thilkè bachilere,
Of beute wot I non his pere,
And he was right of ſuche an age
As youthe his leſe, and ſuche corage.
The luſty folke that dauncid there,
And alſo' othir that with 'hem were,
That werin all of ther meine,
Ful hendè folke, both wiſe and fre,
And folkè of faire porte truely,
There werin allè cominly.
Whan I had ſene the countenaunces
Of them that laddin thus theſe daunces,
Than had I will to go and ſe
The gardin that ſo likid me,
And lokin on theſe faire laureres,
On pine trees, cedres, oliveres.
The dautcis than endid ywere,
For many of 'hem that dauncid there
Were with ther lovis went away,
Undir the trees to have ther play.

A lorde thei livid luſtily!
A grete fole were he ſikirly
That n'olde his thankes ſuche life to lede,
For this dare I ſaine out of drede,

That who ſo might ſo well yfare
For bettir life durſt him not care,
For there n'is ſo gode paradiſe
As to' have a love at his deviſe.
Out of that place went I tho,
And in that gardin gan I go,
Flaying along full merily.
The god of Love full haſtily
Unto him Swete Loking yclept;
No lengir would he that ſhe kept
His bowe of gold that ſhone ſo bright:
He haddin him bent anon right,
And he full ſonè ſet an ende,
And at a braide he gan it bende,
And toke him of his arowes five
Ful ſharpe and redy for to drive.
Now God that ſitteth in majeſte
Fro dedly woundis hè kepe me
If ſo be that he had me ſhete,
For if I with his arowe mete
It had me grevid ſore i-wis;
But I, that nothing wiſt of this,
Went up and doune ful many' a waie,
And he me folowed faſt alwaie;
But no where would I reſtè me
Til' I had in all the gardin be.

The gardin was by meſuring
Right even' and ſquare in compaſſing;
It as longe was as it was large;
Of fruite had every tre his charge
But it were any hidous tre,
Of whiche there werin two or thre.
There were (and that wote I full wele)
Of pomgranetts a full grete dele,
That is a frute ful wel to like,
Namely to folke whan thei ben ſike;
And trees there werin grete ſoiſon
That berin nuttes in ther ſeſon,
Suche as menne Nutemiggis ycall,
That ſote of ſavour ben withall,
And of almandris grete plente,
Figgis, and many a date tre,
There werin, if that menne had nede,
Through the gardin in length and brede.
There was eke wexing many' a ſpice,
As clowe, gilofre, and licorice,
Gingiber, and grein de Paris,
Canell, and ſetewale of pris,
And many' a ſpice delitable
To etin whan men riſe fro table.
And many homely trees there were
That peches, coines, and apples, bere,
Medlers, plommis, peris, cheſteinis,
Cheriſe, of whiche many one faine is,
Notis, and aleis, and bolas,
That for to ſene it was ſolas,
With many high laurer and pine,
Was rengid clene all that gardine
With cipris, and with oliveris,
Of which that nigh no plenty here is.
Ther werin elmis grete and ſtrong,
Maplis, aſhe, oke, aſpe, planis long,
Fine ewe, popler, and lindis faire,
And othir trees full many' a paire.
What ſhould I tell you more of it?
There werin ſo many trees yet
That I ſhould al encombrid be
Er I had rekenid every tre.
Theſe trees were ſet, that I deviſe,
One from an othir in aſſiſe
Five fadome or ſixe, I trowe ſo;
But they were hie and gret alſo,
And for to kepe out wel the funne
The croppis were ſo thicke ironne,
And every braunche in othir knitte,
And ful of grenè levis ſitte,
That funnè might there none diſcende
Leſt that the tendir graſſis ſhende.
There might men does and roes iſe,
And of ſquirels ful grete plente
From bow to bow alwaie leping;
Connis there were alſo playing,
That comin out of ther clapers,
Of ſondry colours and maners,
And madin many' a tourneying
Upon the freſhè graſſe ſpringing.
In placis ſawe I wellis there
In whichè there no froggis were,
And faire in ſhadowe was eche wel;
But I ne can the nombre tel
Of ſtremis ſmal that by deviſe
Mirth had done come thorough condiſe,
Of whiche the watir in renning
Gan makin a noiſe ful liking.
About the brinkis of theſe wellis,
And by the ſtremes ovir al ellis,
Sprange up the graſſe, as thicke iſet
And ſoft eke as any velvet,
On which men might his lemmen lay,
As on a fethirbed to pley,
For the erth was ful ſofte and ſwete;
Thorough the moiſture of the wel wete
Sprong up the ſotè grenè gras
As faire, as thicke, as miſter was;
But moche amended it the place
That the erth was of ſuche a grace
That it of flouris hath plente
That both in ſomre'a nd wintir be.
There ſprange the violet al newe,
And freſhe pervinke riche of hewe,
And flouris yelowe, white, and rede;
Suche plente grewe there ner in mede:
Ful gaie was al the grounde and queint,
And poudrid as men had it peint,
With many' a freſhe and ſondry floure,
That caſtin up ful gode ſavour.
I wol not longe hold you in fable
Of al this gardin dilectable;
I mote my tongè ſtinten nede,
For I ne maie withoutin drede
Naught tellin you the beutie all,
Ne halfe the bounte, there withall.
I went on right honde and on leſte
About the place; it was not leſte
Till I had all the gardin bene
In the eſtris that men might ſene.

And thus while I went in my playe
The god of Love me folowed aye,
Right as an hunter can abide
The beste till he seith his tide
To shote at godenesse to the dere,
Whan that him nedith go no nere.
And so befil I restid me
Besides a wel undir a tre,
Whiche tre in Fraunce men cal a Pine,
But since the time of King Pepine
Ne grewe there tre in mann'is sight
So faire, ne so wel woxe in hight;
In all that yarde so high was none;
And springing in a marble stone
Had nature set, the sothe to tell,
Under that pinè tre a well,
And on the bordir al without
Was written in the stone about
Letteris smal, that saidin thus,
Here whilome starfe faire Narcissus.
Narcissus was a bachilere
That Love had caught in his daungere,
And in his nette gan him so straine,
And did him so to wepe and plaine,
That nede him must his life forgo
For a fair lady hight Echo
Him loved over any creture,
And gan for him suche paine endure,
That on a timè she him tolde
That if he her ne lovin wolde
That her behovid nedis die;
There laie none othir remedie.
But nathèlesse for his beaute
So feirs and dangerous was he,
That he n'olde grauntin her asking
For weping ne for faire praying.
And when she herde him werne her so
She had in hert so gretè wo,
And toke it in so grete dispite,
That she withoutin more respite
Was dede anon; but ere she diede
Ful piteously to God she preide
That the proude hertid Narcissus,
That was in love so daungerous,
Might on a day ben hampered so
For love, and bone so hote for wo,
That ner he might to jole attaine,
Than should he fele in every vaine
What sorow true loveris maken
That ben villainously forsaken.

This prayir was but resonable,
Therfore God helde it ferme and stable,
For Narcissus, shortly to tell,
By aventure came to that well
To rest him in the shadowing
O day when he came from hunting.
This Narcissus had suffrid paines,
For renning all day in the plaines,
And was for tharst in greate distresse
Of herte, and of his wernesse,
That had his brethe almost benomen.
Whan he was to that wel icomen,
That shadowed was with braunchis grene,
He thought of thilkè watir shene
To drinke, and freshe him wele withall,
And doune on knees he gan to fall,
And forth his necke and hed outstraught,
To drinkin of that well a draught;
And in the watre' anone was sene
His nose, his mouthe, his eyin, shene,
And he therof was all abashed,
His owne shadowe had him betrashed,
For wel wende he the forme to se
Of a childe of full grete beaute:
Full well couth Love him wrekè the
Of daungir and of pride also
That Narcissus somtime him bere;
He quite him well his guerdon there,
For he musid so in the well
That shortily, the sothe to tell,
He lovid his owne shadowe so
That at the last he starfe for wo;
For whan he sawe that he his will
Might in no manir way fulfill,
And that he was so fastè caught
That he him couthè comfort naught,
He lost his witte right in that place,
And deide within a litill space;
And thus his warison he toke
For the lady that he forsoke.
Ladies, I praie ensample taketh,
Ye that ayenst your love mistaketh;
If of ther deth you be to wite
Good can ful wel your wilè quite.
Whan this letter, of whiche I tell,
Had taught me that it was the well
Of Narcissus in his beaute,
I gan anon withdrawè me
When it fell in my remembraunce
That him betide suche a mischaunce;
But at the laste than thoughtin I
That scathèlesse full sickirly
I might unto the wellè go,
Wherof shull I abashin so?
Unto the welle than went I me,
And doune I loutid for to se
The clerè watir in the stone,
And eke the gravel, whiche that shone
Doune in th' botom as silvir fine,
For of the welle this is the fine,
In world is none so clere of hewe,
The watre is ever fresh and newe,
That welmith up with wavis bright
The mountenaunce of two fingir hight,
About it is the grasse springing
For moiste so thicke and well liking
That it ne may in wintir die
No more than may the see be drie.

Doune at the botome set sawe I
Two cristal stonis craftily,
In thilkè freshe and faire well;
But o thinge sothly dare I tell
That ye woll holde a grete mervaile
Whan it is tolde withoutin faile,

For whan the ſunnè clere in ſight
Caſt in that welle his bemis bright,
And that the hete deſcendid is,
Than taketh the criſtall ſtone i-wis
Againe the ſunne an hundrid hewis,
Blewe, yelow, red, that freſh and new is,
Yet hath the mervailous criſtall
Suche ſtrength that the place owir all,
Both foule and tre, and levis grene,
And all the yerde, in it is ſene:
And for to don you to' undirſtonde
To make enſample wol I fonde;
Right as a mirrour opinly
Shewith al thing that ſtondeth thereby,
As well the colour as figure,
Withoutin any coviture,
Right ſo the criſtall ſtone ſhining,
Withoutin any diſceving,
The entrees of the yerde accuſeth
To him that in the watir muſeth,
For evir in whiche halfe ye be
Ye may wele halfe the gardine ſe,
And if ye turne ye may right wele
Sene the remenaunt every dele,
For there is none ſo litil thing
So hid ne cloſin with ſhining
That it n'is ſene, as though it were
Ypainted in the criſtall there.
This is the mirrour perillus
In whiche the proude Narciſſus
Sey al his fairè face ſo bright
That made him fith to lie upright,
For who ſo loke in that mirrour
There may nothing ben his ſocour
That he ne ſhal there ſe ſomthing
That ſhal him lede into laughing:
Ful many' a worthy man hath in
Yblent, for folke of gretiſt wit
Ben ſone ycaught here and ywaited;
Withouten reſpite ben they baited:
Here comith to folke of newe rage,
Here chaungith many wight corage,
Here lithe no rede ne witte thorte,
For Venus ſonne, Dan Cupido,
Hath ſowin there of love the ſede,
That helpe ne lithe there non ne rede,
So cerclith it the welle aboute;
His ginnis hath he ſet without,
Right for to catche in his panters
Theſe damoſels and bachilers;
Love will none eſhir birdis catche
Though he ſet eithir nette or latche;
And for the ſede that here was ſowen
This welle is cleped, as well is knowen,
The Welle of Love of very right,
Of whiche there hath ful many wight
Spokin in bokis diverſely;
But thei ſhul ner ſo verily
Diſcripcion of the welle here,
Ne eke the ſothe of this matere,
As ye ſhul whan I have undo
The crafte that here belongith to.

Alway me likid for to dwell
To ſene the chriſtall in the well,
That ſhewid me ful opinly
A thouſande thingis faſtè by;
But I may ſaie in ſory houre
Stode I to lokin or to poure,
For ſithin I ſore have yſikid
That mirrour hath me now entriked;
But had I firſt knowen in my wit
The vertu and ſtrengthis of it,
I n'oldè not have muſid there;
Me had bettir ben ellis-where,
For in the ſnare I fell anone
That had bitreſhid many one.
In thilkè mirrour ſawe I tho,
Among a thouſande thingis mo,
A roſir chargid ful of roſis,
That with an hedge aboute encloſed is;
Tho had I ſuche luſt and envie,
That for Paris ne for Pavie
N'olde I have leſt to gone and ſe
There gretiſt hepe of roſis be.
Whan I was with this rage yhente,
That caught hath many' a man and ſhente,
Towarde the roſir gan I go,
And whan I was not ferre there fro
The ſavour of the roſis ſote
Me ſmote right to the hertè rote,
As I had all enbaumid me;
And if I n'ad endoutid me
To have ben hatid or aſſailed
My thankis wol I not have failed
To pull a Roſe of al that route
To berin in mine honde aboute,
And ſmellin to it where I went;
But er I dredde me to repent,
And leſte it grevid or forthought
The lorde that thilkè gardin wrought.
Of roſis there werin grete wone,
So faire werin nevir in Rone;
Of knoppis cloſe ſome ſawe I there,
And ſome wel bettir woxin were,
And ſome there ben of othir moiſon,
That drowe nigh to ther ſeſon,
And ſpedde 'hem faſtè for to ſpredde;
I lovè wel ſuche roſis-redde,
For brode roſis and open' alſo
Ben paſſid in a daie or two,
But knoppis wollin freſhè be
Two daies at leſt or ellis thre:
The knoppis gretely likid me,
For fairir maie there no man ſe;
Who ſo might havin one of all
It ought him ben ful leſe withall:
Might I garlonde of 'hem getten
For no richeſſe I wolde it letten.
Amonges the knoppis I cheſe one
So faire, that of the remenaunt none
Ne preiſe I halfe ſo wel as it
Whan I aviſin in my wit;
It ſo wel was enluminid
With colour red, as well finid

As Nature couth it makin faire,
And it hath levis wel foure paire,
That Kind hath fet through his knowing;
Aboute the redde rofis fpringing
The ftalke ywas as rifhè right,
And theron ftode the knoppe upright,
That it ne bowed upon no fide;
The fotè fmell yfprong fo wide
That it died al the place aboute:
Whan I had fmelled the favour fote
No will had I fro thence yet go,
But fomdele nere it went I tho
To take it, but mine honde for drede
Ne durft I to the Rofè bede
For thifteles fharpe of many maners,
Netlis, thornis, and hokid briers,
For muche they diftourblid me,
For fore I dradde to harmid be.

The god of Love, with bowe ybent,
That al daie fet had his talent
To purfue and to fpyin me,
Was ftondin by a figge tre,
And whan he fawè how that I
Had chofin fo ententifely
The bothum more unto my pay
Than any othir that I fay,
He toke an arowe fharpely whette,
And in his bowe when it was fette
He ftreight up to his ere ydrough
The ftrongè bowe that was fo tough,
And fhotte at me fo wondir fmerte
That through mine eye unto mine herte
The takil fmote, and depe it wente,
And therwith al fuch colde me hente
That undir clothis warme and fofte
Sin that day I have chivered ofte.
Whan I was hurte thus in ftounde
I fell doune plat unto the grounde,
Mine herte failid and faintid aie,
And longé time in fwoune I laie;
But whan I came out of fwouning,
And hadde my witte and my feling,
I was all mate, and wende full wele
Of blode t' have lorne a full grete dele,
But certes th' arowe that in me ftode
Of me ne drewe no droppe of blode;
For why? I founde my woundes all drie.
Than toke I with mine hondis tweie
The 'arowe, and full faft it out plight,
And in the pulling fore I fight;
So at the laft the fhaft of tre
I drough out with the fethirs thre,
But yet the hokid hedde i-wis,
The whiche Beaute ycallid is,
Gan fo depe in mine hertè pace
That I it ne might not arace,
But in mine hertè ftill it ftode,
All bledde I not a droppe of blode:
I was bothe anguifhous and trouble
For the perill that I fawe double;
I ne wift what to faie or doe,
Ne get a leche my woundis to,
For neither thorough graffe ne rote
Ne had I helpe of hope ne bote,
But to the bothum evir mo
Mine herte drewe, for all my wo
My thought was in none othir thing,
For had it ben in my keping
It would have brought my life again,
For certis evenly, I dare fain,
The fight onely and the favour
Aleggid moche of my languor.
Than gan I for to drawè me
Toward the bothum faire to fe,
And Love had gette him in this throwe
An othir arowe into' his bowe,
And for to fhotin gan him dreffe;
The arowes name was Simpleneffe:
And whan that Love gan nigh me nere
He drowe it up withoutin were,
And fhote at me with all his might,
So that this arowe anone right
Throughout mine eigh, as it was founde,
Into mine herte hath made a wounde:
Than I anone did all my craft
For to ydrawin out the fhaft,
And therewithall I fighid eft;
But in mine hert the hedde was left,
Whiche aie enerefid my defire;
Unto the bothum drewe I nere,
And evirmo that me was wo
The more defire had I to go
Unto the rofir, where that grewe
The freshe bothom fo bright of hewe:
Bettir me were to' have lettin be,
But it behovid nedis me
To doen right as mine hertè badde,
For er the body muft be ladde
Aftir the herte in wele and wo,
Of force togithir thei muft go;
But nevir this archir would fine
To fhote at me with all his pine,
And for to make me to him mete.
The thirde arowe he gan to fhete,
Whan beft his time he might efpie,
The whiche was namid Curtifie,
Into mine herte he did avale:
A fwoune I fell bothe dedde and pale
Long time I laie, and ftirid nought
Till I abraied out of my thought,
And faste than I avifid me
To drawin out the fhaft of tre;
But aye the hedde was lefte behinde
For ought I couthè pull or winde;
So fore it fticked whan I was hit
That by no crafte I might it flit,
But anguifhous and full of thought
I felt foche wo my wounde aie wrought,
That fomoned me alwaie to go
Toward the Rofe that plefed me fo;
But I ne durft in no manere,
Becaufe the archir was fo nere.
For evirmore gladly', as I rede,
Brent child of fire hath mochil dredè:
And certis yet for all my pein
Though that I figh, yet arowis rein,

And ground quarelis, ſharpe of ſtele,
Ne for no pain that I might fele,
Yet might I not my ſelf with hold
The faire roſir to behold,
For Love me yave ſeche hardiment
For to fulfill his commaundement;
Upon my fete I roſe up than
Feble as a forwounded man,
And forthe to goin my might I ſet,
And for the archir n'olde I let:
Toward the roſir faſt I drowe,
But thornis ſharpe mo than inow
There were, and alſo thiſtèles thicke,
And breris brimmè for to pricke,
That I ne might ygettin grace
Through the rough thornis for to pace
To ſene the roſis freſhe of hewe;
I muſt abide though it me rewe:
The hedge about ſo thicke was,
That cloſed the roſis in compas.
But o thing likid me right wele,
I was ſo nigh that I might ſele
Of the bothom the ſote odour,
And alſo ſe the freſhe coloure,
And that right gretely likid me
That I ſo nere mightin it ſe;
Soche joie anon thereof had I
That I forgate my malady;
To ſene it I had ſoche delite
Of woe and angre' I was all quite,
And of my wounde that I had thore,
For nothing likin me might more
Than dwelliti by the roſir aie,
And thens nevir to paſſe awaie:
But whan a while I had be thare
The god of Love, whiche all to ſhare
Mine herte with his arowis kene,
Caſteth him to yeve me woundis grene;
He ſhote at me full haſtily
An arowe namid Companie,
The whiche takil is full able
To make theſe ladies merciable;
Than I anon gan chaungin hewe
For grevaunce of my woundè newe,
That I again fell in ſwouning,
And ſighid ſore in complaining.
Sore I complained that my ſore
On me gan grevin more and more;
I had none hope of allegiance,
So nigh I drowe to diſperaunce;
I ne nought of deth ne of life,
Whethir that Love ywould me driſe;
If me a martir wold he make
I might his powir not forſake:
And while for angir thus I woke
The god of Love and arowe toke
Full ſharp it was and full poinaunt,
And it was callid Faire Semblaunt,
The whiche in no wiſe would conſent
That any lover him repent
To ſerve his love with herte and all
For any perill that maie fall:
But though this arowe was kene grounde
As any raſor that is founde
To cutte and kervin at the poinct,
The god of Love it had anoint
With a full precious ointment,
Some dele to yeve elegèment
Upon the woundis that he hade
Thorough the eye in my herte made,
To helpe her ſöris and to cure,
And that thei maie the bette indure;
But yet this arowe without more
Made in mine herte a largè ſore,
That in full grete pain I abode,
But aie the ointment went abrode;
Throughout my woundis large and wide
It ſprede about in every ſide,
Thorough whoſe vertue and whoſe might
Mine hertè joifull was and light;
I had ben dedde and all to ſhent
But for the precious ointment.
The ſhaft I drowe out of the arowe,
Roking for wo right wondir narowe,
But the hedde, whiche that made me ſmerte,
I left behindè in mine herte
With othir ſower, I dare well ſaie,
That nevir woll be toke awaie;
But the ointment halpè me wele,
And yet ſoche ſorowe did I fele,
That allè daie I chaungid hewe
Of my woundis ſo freſhe and newe,
As men might ſe in my viſage:
The arowes were ſo full of rage,
So variaunt of diverſite,
That men in everiche might ſe
Both grete anoie and eke ſwetneſſe:
And joie ymeint with bittirneſſe:
Now were thei eſy and now wode;
In them I felt bothe harme and gode;
Now ſore without alleggèment,
Now ſoftining with the ointment:
It ſoftenid here and prickid there;
Thus eſe and angir were yfere.

The god of Love delivirly
Came lepande to me haſtily,
And ſayid to me in grete jape,
Yelde the, for thou maie not eſcape,
Maie no defence availe the here,
Therfore I rede make no daungere:
If thou wolt yelde the haſtily
Thou ſhalt the rathir have mercie;
He is a fole in ſikerneſſe
That with daungir or with ſtoutneſſe
Rebellith there that he ſhould pleſe;
In ſoche folie is little eſe;
Be meke where thou muſt nedis bowe;
To ſtrive ayen is not thy prowe:
Come at onis, and have idoe,
For I wollè that it be ſo;
Than yelde the here debonairly.
And I anſwerid full humbly,
All gladly, Sir, at your bidding
I woll me yelde in allè thing:
To your ſervice I woll me take,
For God defende that ſhould make

Ayen your bidding reſiſtence;
I woll not doen ſo grete offence,
For if I did it were no ſkill;
Ye maie do with me what ye will,
Or ſave or ſpill, and alſo ſlo;
Fro you in no wiſe may I go;
My life, my deth, is in your honde,
I maie not laſte out of your bonde;
Plaine at your liſte I yeldè me,
Hoping in hert that ſomtime ye
Comforte and eſe ſhuld to me ſende,
Or els ſhortly, this is the ende,
Withoutin helth I mote aie dure:
But if ye take me to your cure:
Comforte or helth how ſhuld I have,
Sithe ye me hurte, but ye may ſave?
The helth of Love mote be yfounde
Where as thei tokin firſt the wounde;
And if ye liſte of me to make
Your priſoner, I woll it take
Of herte and will fully at gre:
Wholy and plaine I yeldè me
Withoutin feining or feintiſe.
To be governed by you empriſe:
Of you I here ſo mochil priſe
I wol ben whole at your deviſe
For to fulfill all your liking,
And to repentin for nothing,
Hoping to have yet in ſome tide
Mercy of that that I abide:
And with that covenaunt yelde I me,
Anon doune kneling on my kne,
Profiring for to kiſſe his fete,
But for nothing he would me lete;
And ſaid, I love the both and preiſe,
Sens that thine anſwere doth me eſe,
For thou anſwered ſo curtiſly;
For nowe I wote well uttitly
That thou art gentil by thy ſpeche,
For though a man ferre woulde ſeche,
He ſhould not findin in certaine
No ſuche anſwere of no vilaine,
For ſuch a worde ne mightè nought
Iſſue out of a vilaines thought:
Thou ſhalt not leſin of thy ſpeche,
For thy helping willin I eche
And eke encreſin that I maie;
But firſt I woll that thou obaie
Fully for thine own avaauntage
Anone to dó me here homage,
And ſithin kiſſe thou ſhalt my mouthe,
Whiche to no vilaine was ner couthe
For to' aproche it ne for to touche;
For ſauſe of cherlis I ne vouche
That thei ſhal nevir neigh it nere;
For curtèis and of faire manere,
Wel taught and ful of gentilneſſe,
He muſt yben that ſhall me kiſſe,
And alſo of ſtl highe fraunchiſe
That ſhal atteine to that empriſe.
And firſt of o thing warne I the,
That paine and gret adverſite
He moté endure, and eke travaile,
That ſhal me ſerve withoutin faile;
But there againſt the to comforte,
And with thy ſervice to diſporte,
Thou maiſt ful glad and joyfull be
So gode a maiſter to' have as me,
And lordè of ſo high renoun;
I bere of Love the gonfenoun,
And of Curtiſie the banere,
For I am of ſelfe the manere,
Gentill and curteis, meke and fre,
That who evir ententiſe be
Me to honour, re-doute, and ſerve,
And alſo that he him obſerve
Fro treſpace and fro villanie,
And him governe in curtiſie,
With will and with entencion;
For when he firſt in my priſon
Is caught, than muſt be uttirly
Fro thennis-forth ful beſily
Ycaſt him gentill for to be,
Yf he deſire helpe of me.
Anone withoutin more delaie,
Withoutin daungir or affraie,
I become his vaſſal anone,
And gave him thankes many a one,
And knelid doune with hondis joint,
And made it in my porte full queint:
The joye went to my hert is rote
Whan I had kiſſed his mouthe ſo ſote;
I had ſuche mirth and ſuch liking
It curid me of languiſhing.
He aſked of me than hoſtages;
I have takin ſele homages
Of one and othir where I' have bene,
Diſtreinid ofte withoutin wene:
Theſe ſelons ful of falſite
Have many ſithes begilid me,
And through falſhed ther luſt achived,
Wherof I repent and am greved:
And I 'hem gettee in my daungere
Ther falſheed ſhul thei bie ful dere;
But for I love the' I ſaie the plaine
I woll of the be more certaine,
For the ſore I will now ybinde
That thou away ne ſhalt not winde
For to denien thy covenant
Or done that is not avenaunt:
That thou were falſe it wer grete ruth,
Sithe thou ſemiſt ſo ful of truth.
Sir, if the liſte to underſtaunde
I merveile the' aſking this demaunde:
For why or wherfore ſhouldè ye
Hoſtage or borowes aſke of me,
Or any othir ſikirneſſe,
Sithin ye wote in ſothfaſtneſſe
That ye me have ſurpriſid ſo,
And whole mine herte takin me fro,
That it woll doe for me nothing
But if it be at your bidding?
Mine hert is yours, and mine right nought,
As it behoveth, in dede and thought,
Redy in all to worche your will,
Whethir ſo tourne to gode or ill;
So ſore it luſtith you to pleſe
No man therof maie you diſeſe

Ye have theron ſet ſoche juſtice
That it'is werried in many wiſe;
And if ye doubt in n'olde obaie
Ye maie therof do make a kaie
And hold it with you for hoſtage,
Now, certis, this is none outrage.
(Quod Love) and fully I accorde,
For of the body' he is full lorde
That hath the herte in his treſore;
Outrage it were to aſkin more.

Than of his aumener he drough
A little keie fetiſe inough,
Whiche was of gold poliſhed clere,
And ſaied to me, With this keie here
Thine herte to me now woll I ſhet;
For all thy joifull loke and knet
I binde undir this little keie,
That no wight maie cary awaie.
This keie is full of grete poſte,
With whiche anone he touchid me
Undir the ſide full ſoftily,
That he mine hertè ſodainly
Without any doute hath ſo ſpered
That yet right nought it hath me dered:
Whan he had doin his will all out,
And I had put him out of dout,
Sir, I ſaied, I have right grete will
Your luſt and pleſure to fulfill;
Loke ye my ſervice take at gre
By thilke faith ye owe to me;
I ſaie nought for recreaundiſe,
For I nought doubt of your ſervice.
But this ſervaunt travaileth in vain
That for the ſervin doeth his pain
Unto that lorde which in no wiſe
Conne him no thanke for his ſervice.

Love ſayid tho, Diſmaie the nought;
Sithe thou for ſuccour haſt me ſought
In thanke thy ſervice woll I take,
And high of degre woll the mak
If Wickedneſſe ne hindir the,
But (as I hope) it ſhall nought be;
To worſhip no wight by' aventure
Maie come but that he pain endure.
Abide and ſuffre thy diſtreſſe
That hurtith now; it ſhall be leſſe:
I wote my ſelf what maie the ſave,
What medicine thou wouldiſt have.
And if thy truth to me thou kepe
I ſhall unto thine helping eke,
To cure thy woundes and make 'hem clene,
Where ſo that thei be old or grene;
Thou ſhalt be holpen', at wordis few,
For certainly thou ſhalt well ſhewe
Where that thou ſerviſt with gode will,
For to acompliſhe and fulfill
My commaundementis daie and night,
Whiche I to lovirs yeve of right.

Ah Sir! for Godd'is love (ſaied I)
Er ye paſſe hens ententifely
Your commaundementes to me ſaie,
And I ſhall kepe 'hem if I maie,
For them to kepen'is all my thought;
And if ſo be I wote 'hem nought
Than maie I erre unwittingly;
Wherefor I praie you entirly
With all mine herte me for to lere,
That I treſpace in no maniere.
The god of Love than chargid me
Anon, as ye ſhall here and ſe
Wordè by worde, by right empriſe,
So as The Romaunt ſhall deviſe.
The maiſtir leſith time to lere
Whan the diſciple woll not here;
It is but vain on him to ſwinke
That on his lerning woll not thinke:
Who ſo luſt love let him intende,
For now The Romance ginneth to' amende.
Now is gode to herin in ſaie,
If any be that can it ſaie,
And poinct it as the reſon is
Yſet, for othir gate i-wis
It ſhall nat well in allè thing
Be brought to gode underſtanding;
For a reder that poinctith ill
A gode ſentence maie o tin ſpill.
The boke is gode at the ending,
Ymade of newe and luſtie thing,
For who ſo woll the ending here
The craft of Love he ſhall now lere,
If that he woll ſo long abide
Till I this Romaunce maie unhide,
And undoe the ſignifiaunce
Of this dremè into Romaunce:
The ſothfaſtneſſe that now is hid
Without coverture ſhall be kid
Whan I undoen have this dreming,
Wherein no wordè is of leſing.

Villanie at the beginning
I woll, ſaied Love, ovir all thing
Thou leve, if that thou wolt ybe
Falſe, and treſpace ayeniſt me:
I curſe and blame generally
All them that lovin villanie,
For villanie makith villaine,
And by his dedes a chorle is ſeine.
Theſe villains arne without pite,
Frendſhip and love, and all bounte;
I n'ill receive to my ſervice
Them that ben vilains of empriſe.
But undirſtonde in thine entent
That this is not mine entendement
To clepin no wight in no age
Onely gentill for his linage,
But who ſo that is vertuous,
And in his port not outragious:
Whan ſoché one thou ſeeſt the beforne,
Though he be not gentill yborne,

Thou mayiſt well ſcine this in ſoth
That he is gentill, bicauſe he doth
As longith to a gentil man;
Of them none othir deme I can,
For certainly withouten drede
A chorle is demid by his dede
Or hie or lowe, as ye maie ſe,
Or of what kinrid that he be;
Ne ſaie nought for non evill will
Thing which that is to holdin ſtill:
It is no worſhip to miſſeie,
Thou maieſt enſample take of Keie,
That was ſomtime for miſſaying
Yhatid bothe of old and yong:
As ferre as Gawein the worthie
Was praiſid for his curtiſſe
Kaie was hatid, for he was fell,
Of worde diſpitous and cruell;
Wherefore be wiſe and aqueintable,
Godelie of worde, and reſonable,
Bothe to leſſe and eke to mare:
And whan thou comiſt there men are
Loke that thou have in cuſtome aie
Firſt to ſalue 'hem if thou maie;
And if it fall that of 'hem ſomme
Salue the firſt, be thou not domme,
But quite him curtiſly anon,
Without abiding, er thei gon.
For nothing eke thy tong applie
To ſpekin wordes of ribaudrie:
To vilaine ſpeche in no degre
Late not thy lippe unboundin be,
For I nought holde him in gode faith
Curteis that foulè wordis ſaith
And allè women ſerve and preiſe,
And to thy power there honour reiſe;
And if that any miſſayrre
Diſpiſe women that thou maiſt here,
Blame him, and bidde him holde him ſtill;
And ſette thy might and al thy will
Women and ladies for to pleſe,
And to do thing that may 'hem eſe,
That thei evir ſpeke gode of the,
For ſo thou maiſt beſt praiſid be.
Loke that fro pride thou kepe the wele,
For thou maiſt both perceive and fele
That pride is both foly and ſinne;
And he that pride hath him within
Ne may his hertè in no wiſe
Mekin, ne ſouplin to ſervice,
For pride is founde in every parte,
Contrarie unto Lov'is arte;
And he that lovith truily
Should him contein jolily
Withouten pride in ſondry wiſe,
And him diſguiſin in queintice;
For queinte aray, withoutin drede,
Is nothin proude, who takith hede,
For Freſhe aray, as men may ſe,
Withouten pride may oftin be.
Maintaine thy ſelfe aftir thy rent
Of rob and eke of garment,
For many a ſithe faire clothing
A man amendith in muche thinge.
And loke alway that thei be ſhape
(What garment that thou ſhalt the make)
Of him that can the beſt ydo,
With al that parteinith therto,
Pointis and ſleves be wel ſittande
Ful right and ſtreight upon the hande:
Of ſhone and botis newe and faire
Loke at the leſt thou have a paire,
And that thei ſitte ſo ſetouſly
That theſe rude men may uttirly
Mervaile, ſith that thei ſitte ſo plaine,
How thei come on or of againe:
Were ſtreightè glovis, with aumere
Of ſilke: and alway with gode chere
Thou yeve, if that thou have richeſſe,
And if thou have nought ſpende the leſſe:
Alway be mery if thou maie,
But waſtè not thy god alwaie;
Have hatte of flouris freſhe as May,
Chapelet of roſis of Whitſondaie.
For ſoche araie coſtnith but lite;
Thine hondis waſhe, thy tethe make white,
And let no filthe upon the be:
Thy nails blacke if thou maieſt ſe
Voide it awaie deliviry;
And kembe thine hedde right jolily:
Farce not thy viſage in no wiſe,
For that of Love is nat th' empriſe,
For Love doeth hatin, as I finde,
A beautie that cometh nat of kinde:
Alwaie in herte I redè the
Ful glad and mery for to be,
And be as joyfull as thou can;
Love hath no joie of ſorowfull man,
That ill is full of curtiſie,
That knowith in his maladie
For evir of love the ſickeneſſe
Is meint with ſwete and bittirneſſe.
The ſore of love is mervailous,
For now the lovir is joious,
Now can he plain, now can he grone,
Now can he ſinge, now makin mone;
To daie he plaineth for hevineſſe,
To morue' he plaineth for jolineſſe.
The life of love is full contrarie,
Whiche ſtoundè mele can oftin varie;
But if thou caniſt mirthis make
That men in gre woll gladly take
Do it godely, I commaunde the;
For men ſhuld, where ſo er thei be,
Doe thing that 'hem befitting is,
For therof cometh gode loos and pris;
Whereof that thou be vertuous
Ne be nat ſtraunge ne daungerous;
For if that thou gode ridir be
Prickle glady that men maie the ſe:
In armis alſo if thou conne
Purſue till thou a name haſt wonne:
And if thy voice be faire and clere
Thou ſhalt makin no grete daungere;
Whan the to ſing thei godely praie
It is thy worſhip for to' obaie:
Alſo to you it longith aie
To harpe and giterne, daunce and plaie;

For if he can well fote and daunce
It maie him gretely doe avaunce,
Emong eke for thy ladie ſake
Songis and complaintes that thou make,
For that woll mevin in her herte
Whan that thei redin of thy ſmerte:
Loke that no man for ſcarce the holde,
For that maie greve the manifolde;
Reſon woll that a lovir be
In his yeftis more large and fre
Than chorles that ben not of loving;
For who therof can any thing
He ſhall be leſe aie for to yeve,
In londis lore who ſo would leve,
For he that through a ſodain ſight
Or for a kiſſing anon right,
Yave whole his herte in will and thought,
And to himſelf kepith right nought,
Aftir this ſwift gift 'tis but reaſon
He give his gode too in a bandon.

Now woll I ſhortly here reherce
Of that I have yſaied in verce
Alle the ſentence by and by
In wordis fewe compendiouſly,
That thou the bet maieſt on 'hem thinke
Wher ſo it be thou wake or winke,
For the wordis do little greve
A man to kepe whan thei be breve.
Who ſo with Love woll gon or ride
He mote be curteis, voide of pride,
Merie, and full of jolite,
And of largeſſe a loſid be.
Firſt I joigne the here in penaunce
That evir without repentaunce
Thou ſet thy thought in thy loving
To laſt withoutin repenting,
And think upon thy mirthis ſwete
That ſhall ſolue' aftir whan ye mete.
And for thou true to Love ſhalt be
I will and eke commaundè the
That in one place thou ſet all whole
Thine herte, withoutin halfin dole,
For trechetie and ſikirneſſe,
For I loved nevir doubleneſſe.
To many' his herte that woll depart
Everiche ſhall have but little part,
But of him drede I me right nought
That in one place ſettith his thought;
Therefore in o place thou it ſet,
And let it nevir thennis flet,
For if thou yeveſt it in lening
I holde it but a wretchid thing;
Therfore yevith it whole and quite,
And thou ſhalt have the more merite;
If it be lent than aftir ſoen
The bountè and the thanke is doen;
But in love a ſre yevin thing
Requirith a grete guerdoning.
Yeve it in yeſt all quite fully,
And make thy gift debonairly,
For men that yeſt holdin more dere
That yevin is with gladſome chere.
That giftè nought to praiſin is
That a man gevith mal gre his.
Whan thou haſt yeven thine hert (as I
Have ſaid the here all opinly)
Than aventuris ſhull the fall
Whiche hard and hevy ben with all;
For ofte whan thou bethinkeſt the
Of thy loving, where ſo thou be,
Fro folke thou muſt depart in hie,
That none perceive thy maladie,
But hide thine harme thou muſt alone
And go forth ſole and make thy mone.
Thou ſhalt no while be in o ſtate,
But whilom colde and whilom hate,
Now red as roſe, now yelowe' and fade:
Such ſorow I trow thou ner had;
Cotidien ne the quarteine
It is not half ſo full of peine;
For oftin timis it ſhal fal
In love, among thy painis al,
That thou thy ſelfin all wholly
Foryettin ſhalt ſo uttirly
That many timis thou ſhalt be
Still as an image made of tre,
Domme as a ſtone, without ſtering
Of fote or honde, without ſpeking.
And than ſone aftir al thy paine
To memo'rie ſhalt thou come againe,
A man abaſhid wondir ſore,
And aftir ſighin more and more;
For wit thou wele withoutin wene
In ſuche a ſtate ful ofte have bene
That have the' evill of love affaide,
Where thorough thou art ſo diſmaide.

Aftir a thought ſhal take the ſo
That thy love is to ferre the fro,
Thou ſhalt ſa (God) what may this be
That I ne may my lady ſe?
Mine hert alone is to her go,
And I abide al ſole in wo,
Departid fro mine ownè thought,
And with mine eyin ſe right nought.
Alas! mine eien ſene I ne may
My carefull hertè to convay;
Mine hert'is guidè but thei be
I praiſe nothing what er thei ſe;
Shul thei abidin than? why, nay,
But gone and ſe without delay
That whiche mine hert deſirith ſo,
For certainly but if thei go
I ſole my ſelfe I may well holde
Whan I ne ſe what mine hert wolde
Wherfore I wol gone her to ſene,
Or elſid ſhall I nevir bene
But that I have ſome tokining.
Than goſt thou forth without dwelling
But ofte thou faileſt of thy deſire
Er thou maieſt come her any nere,
And waiſtiſt in vaine thy paſſage;
Than faliſt thou in a newe rage;
For want of ſight thou ginniſt murne,
And homwarde penſife doſt returne.

In grete miſchefe than ſhalt thou be,
For than againe ſhal come to the
Sighis and plaintis, with newe wo,
That no itching prickith the ſo;
Who wote it nought he maie go lere
Of them that buyis love ſo dere.
No thing thine hert appefin maie,
That oft thou wolt gone and aſſaie
If thou maiſt ſene by aventure
Thy liv'is joye, thine hert'is cure;
So that by grace if that thou might
Attaine of her to have a ſight
Than ſhalt thou done non othir dede
But with that ſight thine eyin fede.
That faire freſhe whan thou maiſt ſe
Thine hert ſhal ſo raviſhid be
That ner thou woldeſt thy thankis lete,
Ne remove for to ſe that ſwete:
The more thou ſeeſt, in ſothfaſtneſſe,
The more thou coviteſt that ſweteneſſe;
The more thine herte brennith in fire
The more thine herte is in deſire,
For who conſidritn every dele,
It may be likened wondir wele
The paine of love unto a fere,
For evirmore thou neighiſt nere
In thought, or how ſo that it be,
(For very ſothe I tel it the)
The hotter evir ſhalt thou brenne,
As experience ſhall the kenne;
Where ſo comiſt in any coſte
Who is next fire he brennith moſte:
And yet forſothe for al thine hete,
Though thou for love ſwelte and ſwete,
Ne for no thing thou felin may,
Thou ſhalt not wille to paſſe away;
And though thou go, yet muſt the nede
Thinkin al day on her faire hede
Whom thou behelde with ſo gode will,
And holde thy ſelfe begilid ill
That thou ne haddeſt none hardiment
To ſhewe her aught of thine entent;
Thine hert ful ſore thou wolt diſpiſe,
And eke repreve of cowardiſe,
That thou ſo dull in every thing
Were domme for drede without ſpeking.
Thou ſhalt eke thinke thou diddeſt foly
That thou were her ſo faſte bie
And durſt not venture the to ſay
Some thing er that thou came away,
For thou haddiſt no more wonne
To ſpeke of her whan thou begonne;
But yet if ſhe would for thy ſake
In armis godely the have take,
It ſhould have be more worthe to the
Than of treſour a grete plente.
Thus ſhalt thou morne and eke complaine,
And get encheſon t'o gon againe
Unto thy walke or to thy place
Where thou behelde her fleſhly face;
And n'ere for falſe ſuſpection
Thou woldiſt finde occaſion
For to gone in unto her houſe;
Thou arne than ſo deſirous

A ſight of her but for to have,
If thou thine honour mightiſt ſave,
Or any erande mightiſt make,
Thidir for thy lov'is ſake,
Ful faine thou woldiſt, but for drede
Thou goeſt not, leſt that men take hede;
Wherfore I rede in thy going,
And alſo' in thine again comming,
Thou be wel ware that men ne wit;
Feine the othir cauſe than it
To go that waie, or faſte bie;
To helin wel is no folie;
And if ſo be it happe the
That thou thy love there maiſtie yſe,
In ſikir wiſe thou her ſalewe,
Wherwith thy coloure woll tranſmewe,
And eke thy bloud ſhal al to quake,
Thy hewe eke channgin for her ſake,
But worde and wit, with chere ful pale,
Shul want for to tellin thy tale;
And if thou maiſt ſo ferforth winne
That thou to reſon durſt beginne,
And woldiſt faine thre thinges or mo,
Thou ſhalt ful ſcarſly faine the two;
Though thou bethinke the ner ſo wele
Thou ſhalt foryetin yet ſomdele.

But if thou dele with trechery,
For falſe lovirs mowe all fully
Sain what 'hem luſt withoutin dred,
Thei be ſo double' in ther falſhed,
For thei in hert can thinke o thing
And faine an othre' in ther ſpeking:
And whan thy ſpeche is endid all
Right thus to the it ſhal befall;
If any worde than come to minde
That thou to ſay haſt left behinde,
Than thou ſhalt brenne in grete martire,
For thou ſhalt brenne as any fire:
This is the ſtrife and eke the' affraie,
And the batill, that laſtith aie:
This bargaine ende may nevir take
But if that ſhe thy pece wil make.
And whan the night is come anon
A thouſande angres ſhal come on:
To bed as faſt thou wolte the dight,
Where thou ſhalt have but ſmal delight,
For whan thou weniſt for to ſlepe
So ful of paine ſhalt thou crepe,
Sterte in thy bed about ful wide,
And turne ful ofte on every ſide,
Now dounward grouſe, and now upright,
And walow in wo the long night:
Thine armis ſhalt thou ſprede a brede
As man in warre were forwerede;
Than ſhal the come a remembraunce
Of her ſhape and of her ſemblaunce,
Wherto none othir may be pere:
And wete thou wel withoutin were
That the ſhal ſe ſomtime that night
That thou haſt her that is ſo bright
Nakid bitwene thine armis there,
Al ſothfaſtneſſe as though it were;

Thou ſhalt make caſtels than in Spaine,
And dreme of joy al but in vaine,
And the delitin of right nought
While thou ſo ſlombriſt in that thought
That is ſo ſwete and delitable,
The whiche in ſothe n'is but a fable,
For it ne ſhall no whilè laſt:
Than ſhalt thou ſighe and wepè faſt,
And ſay, Dere God! what thing is this?
My dreme is turnid al amis
Whiche was ful ſwete and apparent,
But now I wake it is al ſhent;
Now yede this mery thought away;
Twenty timis upon a day
I would this thought would come againe,
For it alegith wel my paine;
It maketh me ful of joyfull thought;
It ſleeth me that it laſtith nought:
Ah Lorde! whi n'il ye me ſocoure?
The joye I trowe that I langoure,
The deth I would me ſhouldè ſlo
While I lie in her armis two:
Mine harme is harde withoutin wene,
My gret uneſe ful ofte I mene.

But wouldè Love do ſo I might
Have fully joye of her ſo bright
My paine were quitte me richily.
Alas! to gret a thing aſke I;
It is but foly' and wrong wening
To aſke ſo outrageous a thing,
And who ſo aſkith folily
He mote be warnid haſtily;
And I ne wote what I may ſay,
I am ſo ferre out of the way,
For I would have ful grete liking
And ful grete joy of laſſè thing;
For would ſhe of her gentilneſſe
Withoutin more me onis keſſe,
It were to me a grete guerdon,
Releſe of all my paſſion:
But it is harde to come therto;
Al is but foly that I do;
So highe I have mine hertè ſette
Where that I may no comfort gette:
I n'ote wher I ſay well or nought,
But this I wote well in my thought,
That it were bette of her alone
For to ſtintin my wo and mone;
A loke on her I caſt godely
Than for to have al utterly
Of an othir al whole the play.
Ah Lord! where I ſhal bide the day
That ere ſhe ſhal my lady be?
He is ful cured that may her ſe.
Ah God! whan ſhal the dauning ſpringe?
To liggin thus is angry thing;
I have no joy thus here to lie
Whan that my love is not me bie:
A man to lien hath grete diſeſe
Which maie not ſlepe ne reſt in eſe:
I would it dawed and were now day,
And that the night were went away,
For were it daye I would up riſe:
Ah ſlowè ſonne! ſhewe thine enpriſe;
Spede the to ſprede thy bemis bright,
And chace the derkneſſe of the night,
To put away the ſtoundis ſtrong
Whiche in me laſtin al to long.
The night ſhalt thou continue ſo
Withoutin reſt, in paine and wo;
If er thou knew of love diſtreſſe
Thou mowe lerne it in that ſikeneſſe;
And thus enduring ſhalt thou lie,
And riſe on morow up erly
Out of thy bed, and harneis the
Er evir dawning thou maiſt ſe:
Al privily than ſhalt thou gone,
What wethre' it be, thy ſelfe alone,
For reine or haile, for ſnowe for ſlete,
Thidir ſhe dwelleth that is ſo ſwete,
The whiche maie fal a ſlepè be,
And thinkith but lite upon the:
Than ſhalt thou go, ful ſoule aſerde,
Loke if the gatè be unſperde,
And waite without in woe and paine,
Full ill a colde in winde and raine:
Than ſhalt thou go the dore before,
If thou maiſte findin any ſhore,
Or hole, or refte, what ere it were;
Than ſhalt thou ſtoupe and lay to ere
If they within a ſlepè be,
I mene al ſave thy lady fre,
Whom waking if thou maiſt aſpie
Go put thy ſelfe in jupardie,
To aſkin grace and the bimene,
That ſhe maie wete withoutin wene
That thou all night no reſt haſt had,
So ſore for her thou were beſtad.
Women wel ought pite to take
Of them that ſorowen for ther ſake:
And loke for love of that relike
That thou thinkè none othir like,
For whan thou haſt ſo gret anney
Shall kiſſe the er thou go awey,
And hold that in ful grete deinte:
And for that no man ſhal the ſe
Before the houſe ne in the way,
Loke thou be gon againe er day:
Suchè comming and ſuche going,
Suche hevineſſe and ſuche walking,
Makith lovirs withoutin wene
Undir ther clothis pale and lene.
Love ne leveth coloure ne clereneſſe;
Who lovith trewe hath no fatneſſe.
Thou ſhalt wel by thy ſelfin ſe
That thou muſt nedes aſſavid be,
For men that ſhape 'hem othir way
Falſely ther ladies to betray
No wondir is though thei be fatte,
With falſe othis ther loves thei gatte,
For ofte I ſe ſuche loſingeours
Fattir than abottes or priours.
Yit with o thing I wolle the charge,
That is to ſay, that thou be large
Unto the maide that her doth ſerve;
So beſt her thanke thou ſhalte deſerve:

Yeve her geſtis, and get her grace,
For ſo thou may thankè purchace,
That ſhe the worthy holde and fre,
The lady and al that may the ſe:
Alſo her ſervauntes worſhip aie,
And pleſin as muche as thou maie;
Grete gode through them may come to the,
Bicauſe with her thei ben prive;
Thei ſhal her tell how thei the ſande
Curteis and wiſe, and wel doande,
And ſhe ſhal preiſe the wel the more:
Loke out of londe thou be not fore,
And if ſuche cauſe thou have that the
Behoveth to gone out of countre,
Leave wholely thine hert in hoſtage
Til thou againe make thy paſſage:
Thinke longe to ſe the ſwetè thing
That hath thine hert in her keping.
Now have I told the in what wiſe
A lovir ſhal do me ſervice;
Do it than if that thou wolt have
The mede that thou doſt aſtir craye.

Whan Love al this had bodin me
I ſaid him, Sir, how may it be
That lovirs may in ſuche manere
Endure the paine ye have ſaid here?
I marvaillin me wondir faſte
How any man may live or laſte
In ſuche paine and in ſuch brenning,
In ſorue' and thought, and ſuche ſighing,
Aie unreleſid wo to make
Wher ſo it be thei ſlepe or wake,
In ſuche anoy continuelly;
As helpe me God this mervaile I
How man, but he were made of ſtele,
Might live a monthe ſuch paines to ſele.

The god of Love than ſaid to me,
Frende, by the feith I owe to the
May no man have gode but he' it bie:
A man lovith more tendirlie
The thing that he hath bought moſt dere;
For wete thou well withoutin were
In thanke that thing is takin more
For which a man hath ſuffrid ſore:
Certis no wo ne may attaine
Unto the ſore of lov'is paine,
None evil therto may amounte,
No more than a man may counte
The droppes that of the watir be,
For drie as wel the grete ſe
Thou mightiſt as the harmis tell
Of all them that with Love ydwell
In ſervice, for peinè them ſleeth,
And that eche wouldè ſle the deeth,
And trewe thei ſhould nevir eſcape,
Ne were that hope ycouth 'hem make
Glad as a man in priſon ſete
And maie not gettin for to ete
But barlie bred and watir pure,
And lieth in vermin and ordure:
With allè this yet can he live.
Gode hope ſuche comfort hath him yeve,
Whiche makith wene that he ſhal be
Releſed and come to liberte:
In Fortune is fully his truſt
Although he lie in ſtrawe or duſt;
In hope is al his ſuſtaining:
So fare lovirs in ther wenning
Whiche Love hath ſhitte in his priſoun,
Gode hope is ther ſalvacioun;
Gode hope (how ſorè that thei ſmerte)
Yevith 'hem bothè will and herte
T' offre ther body to martyre,
For hope ſo ſore doth 'hem deſire
To ſuffre' eche harme that men deviſe
For joyè that aftirwarde ſhall riſe.

Hope in deſire catche victory,
In hope of Love' is al the glory,
For hope is all that Love maie yeve;
N'ere hope there ſhould no lengir live:
Bleſſid be hope! whiche with deſire
Avaunceth lovirs in ſuch manire.
Gode hope is curteiſe for to pleſe,
To kepe lovirs from all diſeſe:
Hope kepeth his londe, and woll abide
For any peril maie betide,
For hope to lovirs, as moſt cheſe,
Doth 'hem endurin all miſcheſe;
Hope is ther helpe whan miſtir is;
And I ſhal yeve the eke i-wis
Thre othir thinges that gret ſolace
Doth to them that be in my lace.
The firſt gode that may be yfounde
To them that in my lace be bounde
Is ſwetè thought, for to recorde
Thingè wherwith thou canſt accorde
Beſt in thine herte, whethir ſhe be
Thinking in abſence gode to the.
Whan any lovir doth complaine,
And livith in diſtreſſe and paine,
Than ſwetè thought ſhal come as blive
Awaie his angre for to drive;
It makith lovirs have remembraunce
Of comforte and of highe pleſaunce
That hope hath hight him for to winne;
For thought anone than ſhall beginne,
As ferre God wote as he can finde,
To make a mirrour of his minde,
For to beholde he wol not let,
Her perſon he ſhal force him ſet,
Her laughing eyen perſaunt and clere,
Her ſhape, her forme, her godely chere,
Her mouthe, that is ſo gracious,
So ſwete, and eke ſo favirous,
Of al her fetirs ſhal take hede,
His eyen with all her limmis fede.
Thus ſwete thinking ſhal aſwage
The paine of lovirs and ther rage;
Thy joye ſhal double without geſſe
Whan thou thinkiſt on her ſemelineſſe,
Or of her laughing or her chere,
That to the made thy lady dere:

This comfort wol I that thou take,
And if the nexte thou wolt forſake,
Whiche is not leſſe favirous,
Thou ſhouldeſt not ben to daungirous.

The ſecond ſhal be ſwetè ſpeche,
That hath to many one be leche,
To bring 'hem out of wo and were,
And helpe many a bachilere,
And many' a lady ſent ſocour,
That had ylovid paramoure,
Thorough ſpeking (whan thei might here)
Of their lovirs to them ſo dere;
To me it voidith al ther ſmerte
The whiche is cloſid in ther herte;
In hert it maketh 'hem glad and light,
Speche, whan thei mowe not havin ſight;
And therfore nowe it cometh to minde
In oldè dawis, as I finde,
That clerkis written that her knewe
There was a lady freſhe of hewe
Whiche of her love madin a ſong,
On him for to remembre' among,
In whiche ſhe ſaid, Whan that I here
Spekin of him that is ſo dere
To me it voidith allè ſmerte;
Iwis he ſittith ſo nere myn herte,
To ſpek of him at eve or morowe
It curith me of al my ſorowe;
To me is none ſo high pleſaunce
As of his perſon daliaunce.
She wiſt ful wele that ſwete ſpeking
Comfortith in ful mochil thing;
Her love ſhe had full well aſſaide,
Of him ſhe was ful wel apaide;
To ſpeke of him her joye was ſet;
Therefore I rede the that thou get
A felowe that can wel concele
And kepe thy counſaile, and welle hele,
To whom go ſhewe wholly thine herte,
Both wele and woe, and joye and ſmerte:
To get comforte to him thou go,
And privily bitwene you two
Ye ſhal ſpeke of that godely thing
That hath thine hert in her keping,
Of her beaute and her ſemblaunce,
And of her godely continuance;
Of al thy ſtate thou ſhalt him ſaie,
And aſke him counſaile how thow maie
Do any thing that maie her pleſe,
For it to the ſhal do gret eſe,
That he maie wete thou truſt him ſo
Both of thy wele and of thy wo;
And if his herte to love be ſette
His companie is moche the bette,
For reſon wol he ſhewe to the
Al uttirly his privite,
And what ſhe is he lovith ſo
To the plainly he ſhal undo,
Withoutin drede of any ſhame
Both tell her renome and her name;
Than ſhall he forthir ferre and nere,
And namely to thy lady dere
In ſikir wiſe ye every other
Shal helpin as his owne brother
In trouthe withoutin doubleneſſe,
And kepin cloſe in ſikirneſſe;
For it is noble thing in ſay
To have a man thou darſtè ſay
Thy privy counſaile every dele,
For that woll comforte the right wele;
And thou ſhalt holde the wel apaied
Whan ſuche a frende thou haſt aſſaied.

The thirdè gode of grete comfort,
That yevith lovirs moſt diſport,
Comith of ſight and beholding,
That is yclepid Swete Loking,
The whichè may none eſe ydo
Whan thou art ferre thy lady fro,
Wherfore thou pleſe alway to be
In placè where thou maiſt her ſe,
For it is thing moſt amirous
Moſte delitable' and favirous,
For to aſſwage a mann'is ſorow
To ſene his lady by the morow;
For it is a ful noble thing
Whan that thine eyin have meting
With that relike ſo precious
Whereof thei be ſo deſirous.
But al daie aftir ſothe it is
Thei have no drede to faren amis;
Thei dredin neither winde ne raine,
Ne non othir manir of paine;
For whan thine eyen were thus in bliſſe
Yet of ther curtiſie iwiſe
Alone thei can not have ther joye,
But to the hertè thei convoye
Parte of ther bliſſe, to him thou ſende
Of all this harme to make amende,
The eye is a gode meſſangere,
Which can to the' hert in ſuch manere
Tidingis ſende, that he hath ſene
To voide him of his painis clene,
Wherof the hert rejoyſith ſo
That a grete partie of his wo
Is voided, and put away to flight;
Right as the derkeneſſe of the night
Is chaſed with clereneſſe of the mone,
Right ſo is al his wo ful ſone
Devoidid clene whan that the ſight
Beholdin may that freſhè wight
Whiche that the hert deſirith ſo,
That al his derkeneſſe is ago,
For than the herte is all at eſe
When thei ſene that that maie 'hem pleſe.
Now have I declared the al out
Of that thou were in drede and doute,
For I have tolde the faithfully
What the may curin uttirly,
And all lovirs that wollin be
Faithful and of ſtabilite;
Gode Hope alway kepe by thy ſide,
And Swetè Thought make eke abide,
Swetè Loking and Swetè Speche,
Of al thine harmes thei ſhal be leche:

Of bale thou ſhalt have grete pleſaunce
Yf thou canſt bide in ſuffiraunce,
And ſervin wele without feintiſe;
Thou ſhalt be quite of thine empriſe
With more guerdoun if that thou live,
But al this time this I the yeve.

The god of Love, whan al the day
He' had taught me as ye have herd ſay,
And enformid compendiouſly,
He vaniſhed al ſodainly,
And I alone yleſte al ſole,
So full of complaint and of dole,
For I ſawe no man there me by.
My woundes me grevid wondirſly;
Me for to cure nothing I knewe
Save the bothum ſo bright of hewe,
Wheron was ſette wholly my thought;
Of othir comforte knewe I nought,
But it were through the god of Love;
I knew nat elſe to my behove
That might me eſe or comfort gette
But if he would him entermette.
The roſir was withoutin doute
Ycloſid with an hedge without,
As ye to forne have herde me ſaine,
And faſt I beſied and would faine
Have paſſid the hay, if I might
Have gettin in by any ſleight,
To the bothum ſo faire to ſe,
But evir I dradde blamed to be
Yf men would have ſuſpection
That I would of entencion
Have ſtole the roſis that there were,
Therefore to entre' I was in fere;
But at the laſte, as I bethought
Whethir I ſhuldè paſſe or nought,
I ſawe come, with a gladdè chere,
To me a luſty bachilere
Of gode ſtature and of gode height,
And Bialacoil forſoth he height;
Sonnè he was to Curtiſie,
And he me grauntid ful gladlie
The paſſage of the uttir hay,
And ſaidè, Sir, how that ye may
Paſſe, if that it your wille ybe,
The freſhè roſir for to ſe,
And ye the ſwetè ſavour fele,
Your warrant I may be right wele;
So thou the kepin fro folie
Shal no man do the vilanie;
Yf I mai helpin you in ought
I ſhall not faine, dredith right nought,
For I am bounde to your ſervice
Fully devolde of all feintiſe.
Than unto Bialacoil ſaide I,
I thank you, Sir, ful hertily,
And your beheſt I take at gre
That ye ſo godely profir me;
To you it cometh of grete fraunchiſ
That ye me profir your ſerviſe.
Than aſtir ful delivirly
Through the brers anone wen I
Wherof encombrid was the haie;
I was well pleſed, the ſothe to ſaie,
To ſe the bothum faire and ſote
So freſhe yſprung oute of the rote.

And Bialacoil me ſervid wele
Whan I ſo nigh me mightin fele
Of the bothum the ſwete odoure,
And ſo luſty hewed of coloure;
But than a chorle, foule him betide!
Beſide the roſis gan him hide,
To kepe the roſis of that roſere,
Of whom the namè was Daungere.
This chorle was hid there in the greves,
Ycovirid with graſſe and leves,
To ſpie and take whom that he fonde
Unto that roſir put an honde.
He was not ſole, for there was mo,
For with him werin othir two
Of wickid manirs and ill fame;
That one was clepid by his name
Wickid Tonge, God yeve him ſorowe!
For neither at eve ne at morowe
He can of no man gode yſpeke;
On many' a juſte man doth he wreke.
There was a woman that eke hight
Shamè, that who can rekin right
Treſpace ywas her fathir's name,
Her mothir Reſon; thus was Shame
Ybrought forth of theſe ilkè two,
And yet had Treſpace nere adoe
With Reſon, ne nere leie her by,
He was hidous and ſo ugly;
I menè this, that Treſpace hight,
But Reſon conceveth of a ſight
That Shame of which I ſpake aforne:
And whan that Shame was thus yborne
It was ordained that Chaſtite
Should of the roſir lady be,
Whiche of the bothums more and las
With ſondrie folke aſſailid was,
That ſhe ne wiſtè what to doe,
For Venus her aſſailith ſo
That night and daie fro her ſhe ſtall
Bothoms and roſis ovir all:
To Reſon than praieth Chaſtite,
Whom Venus hath ſtemed ore the ſe,
That ſhe her doughter would her lene
To kepe the roſir freſhe and grene.
Anon Reſon to Chaſtite
Is fully' aſſentid that it be,
And grauntid her at her requeſt
That Shame, bicauſe ſhe is honeſt,
Shall kepir of the roſir be;
And thus to kepe it there were thre,
That none ſhould hardie be ne bolde
(Were he yongè or were he olde)
Again her will awaie to bere
Bothoms ne roſis that there were.
I had well ſped had I nat ben
Awaitid with theſe thre and ſene,
For Bialacoil, that was ſo faire,
So gracious and debonaire,

Quitte him to me ful curtisly,
And me to plesin badde that I
Should drawe to the bothom nere;
Freſe in to touchin the roſere
Whiche bare the roſe he yaſe me leve;
This graunt ne might but litill greve;
And for he ſawe it likid me
Right nigh the bothom pullid he
A leſe all grene, and yave me that,
The whiche full nigh the bothom ſat:
I madin of that leſe full queint,
And whan I felt I was aqueinte
With Bialacoil, and ſo prive,
I wende all my will had ybe,
Than wext I hardie for to tell
To Bialacoil how me befell
Of Love that toke and woundid me,
And ſayid, Sir, ſo mote I the,
I maie no joie have in no wiſe
Upon no ſide, but it ariſe
For ſithè (if I ſhall not faine)
In herte I have had ſo grete paine,
So grete anoie, and ſoche affraie,
That I ne wotte what I ſhall ſaie;
I drede your wrothe to deſerve;
Levir me were that knivis kerve
My bodie ſhould in pecis ſmall
Than in any wiſe it ſhould fall
That ye wrothid ſhould ben with me.
Saie boldily thy will, (quod he)
I n'ill be wrothe, if that I maie,
For nought that thou ſhalt to me ſaie.

Than ſaied I, Sir, not you diſpleſe
To knowin of my grete uneſe,
In which only Love hath me brought,
For painis grete, diſeſe, and thought,
Fro daie to daie it doeth me drie;
Suppoſith not, Sir, that I lie;
In me five woundis did he make,
The ſore of whiche ſhall nevir ſlake
But ye the bothom graunte me
Whiche is moſt pauſſaunt of beaute,
My life, my deth, and my martyre,
And treſour that I moſte deſire.
Than Bialacoil, affrayid all,
Sayid, Sir, it maie not befall
That ye deſire; it maie not riſe;
What! would ye ſhende me in this wiſe?
A mokill ſolè than I were
If I ſuffrid you' awaie to bere
The freſhe bothom ſo faire of ſight,
For it were neithir ſkill ne right
Of the roſir ye broke the rinde,
Or take the Roſe aſorne his kinde:
Ye are not curteis to aſke it;
Let it ſtill on the roſir ſit;
Let it growe till it' amendid be,
And perfitly come to beaute;
I n'olde not that it pullid were
Fro the roſir that doth it bere,
To me it is ſo leſe and dere.
With that anon ſtert out Daungere
Out of the place where he was hidde;
His malice in his chere was kidde:
Full grete he was, and blacke of hewe,
Sturdie and hidous, who ſo' him knewe;
Like ſharpe urchons his here was growe,
His eyes red-ſparcling as fire glowe;
His noſe frouncid full kirkid ſtode;
He come criande as he were wode,
And ſaied, Bialacoil, tel me why
Thou bringiſt hidir ſo boldely
Him that ſo nigh to the roſere?
Thou worchiſt in a wrong manere;
He thinkith to diſhonour the;
Thou art well worthy to 'have malgre
To let him of the roſere witte:
Who ſervith Fellone is ill quitte.
Thou woldiſt have doen grete bounte,
And he with ſhame would quitè the.
Flie hens, felowe; I rede the go;
It wantith lite he wol the ſlo,
For Bialacoil ne knewe the nought
Whan the to ſerve he ſet his thought,
For thou wolt ſhame him if thou might
Bothe again reſon and 'gainſt right:
I woll no more in the affie
That comeſt ſo ſlightly for t' eſpie,
For it provith wondirly wele
Thy ſleight and treſon every dele.
I durſt no more make there abode
For the chorlè, he was ſo wode:
So gan he threttin and manace,
And through the haie he did me chace,
For fere of him I trembled and quoke,
So chorliſhely his hedde he ſhoke,
And ſaied, If eſt he might me take
I ſhould nat from his hondis ſcape,
Than Bialacoil is fled and mate,
And I all ſole diſconſolate
Was left alone in pain and thought;
Fro ſhame to deth I was nigh brought:
Than thought I on my high folie,
How that my bodie uttirlie
Was yeve to paine and to martire,
And therto had I ſo grete ire,
That I ne durſt the hayis paſſe;
There was no hope, there was no grace;
I trowe nevir man wiſte of pain
But he were laced in Lov'is chain,
Ne no man wiſt, (and ſoth it is)
But if he love, what angir is.
Love holdeth his heſte to me right wele;
Whan pain (he ſayid) I ſhould fele
No herte maie thinke no tongè ſaie
A quartir of my wo and pain;
I might not with the angir laſt;
Mine herte in poinct was for to braſt
Whan I thought on the Roſe, that ſo
Was thorough Daungir caſt me fro.
A long while ſtode I in that ſtate,
Till that me ſawe ſo madde and mate
The ladie of the highè ward,
Whiche from her toure lokid thidirward.
Reſon men clepin that lady,
Whiche from her toure delivirly

Came doune to me withoutin more;
But ſhe was neither yong ne hore,
Ne high ne lowe, ne fatte ne lene,
But beſt, as it were in a mene:
Her eyin two were clere and light
As a candill that brennith bright;
And on her hedde ſhe had a croune;
Her ſemid well an high perſoune,
For round environ her crounet
Was full of riche ſtonis afret;
Her godely ſemblaunt by deviſe
I trowe was made in Paradiſe,
For Nature had nevir ſoche grace
To forge a worke of ſoche compace;
For certain, but if the' lettir lie,
Grete God himſelf, that is ſo hie,
Formid her aftir his image,
And yaſe her ſithe ſoche avauntage
That ſhe hath might and ſeignorie
To kepè men from all folie:
Who ſo woll trowè wele her lore
Ne maie offendin nevirmore.
And while I ſtode thus derke and pale
Reſon began to me her tale:
She ſaied, Al haile, my ſwetè frende!
Folie and childhod woll the ſhende,
Whiche the have put in grete afraie;
Thou haſt bought dere the time of Maie,
That made thin herte merie to be;
In evill time thou wenteſt to ſe
The gardin whereof Idilneſſe
Ybare the keie and was maiſtreſſe,
Whan that thou yediſt in the daunce
With her, and haddin acquaintaunce;
Her acquaintaunce is perillous,
Firſt ſoft, and aftir full noious;
She hath the traſhid without wene;
The god of Love had the nat ſene,
Ne had Idilneſſe the conveide
Within the verge where Mirthe himpleide;
If Folie have ſurpriſid the
Doe ſo that it recovered be,
And be well ware to take no more
Counſaile that grevith aftir ſore:
He' is wiſe that woll himſelf chaſtiſe.
Though a yong man in any wiſe
Treſpaſſe emong end doe folie,
Let him nat dwelle, but haſtilie
Let him amende what ſo be mis;
And eke I counſaile the i-wis
The god of Love wholly foryete,
That hath the in ſoche pain yſete,
And the in herte tourmentid ſo;
I can not ſene how thou maieſt go
Othir waies the to gariſoun,
For Daungere, that is ſo feloun,
Fellie purpoſeth the to werreie,
Whiche is fulle cruill, ſothe to ſeie.

And yet of Daungere cometh no blame;
In reward of my daughtir Shame,
Whiche hath the roſis in her warde,
As ſhe that maie be no muſarde,
And Wickid Tong is with theſe two,
That ſuffrith no man thidir go,
For er a thing be doe he ſhall,
Where that he comith ovir all,
In fourtie placis, if' it be ſought,
Saie thing that nere was don ne wrought,
So moche traiſon is in his male,
Of falſeneſſe for to faine a tale.
Thou deleſt with angrie folke i-wis,
Wherefore to the bettir is
From theſe folkis awaie to fare,
For thei woll make the live in care;
This is the ill that Love thei call,
Wherein there is but folie all,
For love is folie every dell;
Who loveth in no wiſe maie doe well,
Ne ſet his thought on no gode werke;
His ſchole he leſeth if he be clerke,
Or othir craft if that he be
He ſhall not thrive therein, for he
In love ſhal have more paſſioun
Than monke, or hermite, or chanoun.
This pain is herd out of meſure;
The joiè maie no while endure;
And eke in the poſſeſſion
Is mochil tribulacioun;
The joie it is ſo ſhort laſting,
And but in hape is the getting;
I ſe there many in travaile
That at the laſt ſhall fouly faile;
I was nothing thy counſailer,
Whan thou were made the homager
Of god of Love to haſtily,
Where was no wiſedome but folie;
Thine harte was jolie but not ſage
Whan thou were brought in ſoche a rage
To yelde the up ſo redily
To Love of his grete maiſtiry.

I rede the Love awaie to drive,
That maketh the reche not of thy live;
The folie more fro dai to daie
Shall growe but thou it put awaie;
Take with thy tethe the bridill faſte
To daunt thy herte, and eke thee aſte,
If that thou maieſt, to get defence
For to redreſſe thy firſt offence;
Who ſo his herte alwaie woll leve
Shall finde emong that ſhall him greve.
Whan I her herd thus me chaſtiſe
I anſwerde in full angrie wiſe,
I prayid her ceſſe of her ſpeche
Eithir to chaſtiſe me or teche,
To biddè me my thought refrein,
Whiche Love hath caught in his demein:
What wenin ye Love woll conſent
(That me aſſeyith with bowe bent)
To drawe mine herte out of his honde,
Whiche is ſo quickly in his bonde?
That ye counſaile maie nevir be,
For whan he firſt areſtid me
He toke mine herte ſo fore him till
That it is nothing at my will;

He taught it ſo him for to' obeie
That he it ſparrid with a keie.
I praie you let me be all ſtill,
For ye maie well, if that ye will,
Your wordis waſte in idilneſſe,
For uttirly, withoutin geſſe,
All that ye ſaine is but in vain;
Me were levir die in the pain
Than Love to meward ſhould arette,
Falſhede or treſon on me ſette:
I woll me gettin pris or blame,
And love true for to ſave my name:
Who me chaſtiſith I him hate.
With that worde Reſon went her gate,
Whan ſhe ſawe for no ſermoning
She might me fro my folie bring:
Than diſmayid I left all ſole,
For-werie, for-wandred, as a ſole,
For I ne knewe no cheriſaunce:
Than fell into my remembraunce
How Love ybadde me to purveie
A felawe to whom I might ſeie
My counſaile and my privite,
For that ſhould moche availin me.
With that bethought I me that I
Ybad a felaw faſtè by
True and ſikir, curteis and hende,
And he called was by name a Frende;
A truer Felawe was no where none.
In haſte to him I went anone,
And to him all my wo I told,
Fro him right nought I would withold,
I tolde him all withoutin were,
And made my compleint on Daungere,
How for to ſeie he was hidous,
And to meward contrarious,
The whichè through his cruilte
Was in poinct to have meimid me,
With Bialacoil whan he me ſeie
Within the gardin walke and pleie
Fro me he made him for to go,
And I be left alone in wo;
I durſt no lengir with him ſpeke,
For Daungir ſaied he would be wreke
Whan that he ſawe how that I went
The freſhè bothom for to hent,
If I werè hardie to come nere
Bitwene the haie and the roſere.
This frende, whan he wiſt of my thought,
He diſcomfortid me right nought!
But ſaied, Felawe, be nat ſo madde,
Ne ſo abaſhid nor beſtadde;
My ſelfe I knowe full well Daungere,
And how that he is fiers of chere,
At primè temps, Love to manace;
Full oft I have ben in his caſe;
A felon firſt though that he be,
Aftir thou ſhalt him ſouple ſe:
Of long paſſid I knewe him wele;
Ungodelie firſt though men him fele
He woll meke aſtre' in his bering
Ben for ſervice and obeiſing:
I ſhall thè tell what thou ſhalt doo;
Mekely I rede thou go him to,
Of herte praie him ſpecially
Of thy treſpace to have mercie,
And hotin him well here to pleſe,
That thou ſhalt ner more him diſpleſe:
Who can beſt ſerve of flatiry
Shall pleſe Daungir moſt uttirly.
My frende hath ſaied to me ſo wele
That he me eſid hath fomedele,
And eke allegged of my tourment,
For through him had I hardiment
Again to Daungir for to go,
To preve if I might make him ſo.

To Daungir cam I all aſhamed,
The whiche aforne me had yblamed,
Deſiring for t' apeſe my wo,
But over hedge durſt I nat go,
For he forbode me the paſſage:
I founde him cruill in his rage,
And in his honde a grete bourdoun:
To him I knelid lowe adoun,
Full meke of port and ſimple' of chere,
And ſaied, Sir, I am comin here
Only to aſk of you mercie;
It grevith me full gretily
That evir I have wrathid you,
But for to' amende I am come now,
With all my might bothe loude and ſtill
To doin right at your own will,
For Love madin me for to do
That I have treſpaſſed hidirtò,
Fro whome I nè maie drawe mine herte,
Yet ſhall I nere for joie ne ſmerte
(What ſo befall me, gode or ill)
Offendin more again your will;
Levir I have endure diſeſe
Than doe that whiche ſhould you diſpleſe.

I you require and praie that ye
Of me have mercie and pite,
To ſtint your ire that grevith ſo,
That I woll ſwere for evirmo
To be redreſſed at your liking
If I treſpace in any thing,
Save that (I praie the) graunte me
A thing that maie nat warnid be,
That I maie love all oni'y,
None othir thing of you aſke I;
I ſhall doin all wele i-wis,
If of your grace you graunt me this,
And that ye maie nat lettin me,
For well wote ye that love is fre,
And I ſhall loven ſoche that I will,
Who evir like it well or ill,
And yet ne would I for all Fraunce
Doe thing to doe you diſpleſaunce.
Than Daungir fill in his entent
For to foryeve his male talent,
But all his wrathe yet at the laſt
He hath releſed, I praied ſo faſt.
Shortly, (he ſayid) thy requeſt
Is nat to mokill diſhoneſt,

Ne I woll nat wernin it the,
For yet nothing engrevith me;
For though thou love thus evirmore
To me is neithir soft ne sore:
Love where the list, what rechith me?
So ferre thou fro my rosis be;
Trust not on me for none assaie
In any time to passe the haie.
Thus hath he grauntid my praiere:
Than went I forthe withoutin were
Unto my frende, and told him all
Whiche was right joifull of my tale.
(He saied) Now goeth well thine affaire,
He shall to the be debonaire;
Though he aforne was dispitous
He shall hereaftir be gracious;
If he were touched on some gode vein
He should yet rewin on thy pein:
Suffir, I rede, and no boste make
Till thou at gode mes maiest him take?
By suffraunce and by wordis soft
A man maie ovircomin oft
Him that aforne he had in drede,
In bokis sothly as I rede.
Thus hath my frende with grete comfort
Avauncid me with high disport,
Whiche would me gode as moche as I;
And than anon full sodainly
I toke my leve, and streight I went
Unto the haie, for grete talent
I had to sene the freshe bothom
Wherein laie my salvacion,
And Daungir toke kepe if that I
Kepe him covinaunt truily:
So sore I drede his manasing
I durst not brekin his bidding,
For lest that I were of him shent
I brake not his commaundiment,
For to purchasin his gode will
It was for to comin there till;
His mercie was to ferre behinde
Ykept, for I ne might it finde:
I complainid and sighid sore,
And languishid evir the more,
For I ne durst nat ovir go
Unto the Rose I lovid so,
Throughout my deming uttirly
That he had knowlege certainly:
Than Love me ladde in sothe wise
That in me there was no feintise
Ne falshedde, ne no trecherie,
And yet he full of villanie,
And of disdaine and cruilte,
On me ne would have no pite
His cruill will for to refrain,
Tho I wept aie and me complain.

And while I was in this turment
Were come of grace, by God ysent,
Dame Fraunchise, and with her Pite,
Fulfilde the bothom of bounte:
Thei go to Daungir anon right
To ferthir me with all ther might,
And helpe me in worde and in dede,
For well thei sawe that it was nede.
First of her grace Dame Fraunchise
Ytakin hath of this emprise;
She saied Daungir, grete wrong ye doe
To worch this man so mochil woe,
Or pinin him so angirlie,
It is to you grete vilanie;
I can not se ne why ne how
That he hath trespassed again you,
Save that he loveth, wherefore ye sholde
The more in charite' of him hold:
The force of Love maketh him do this;
Who would him blame he did amis:
He levith more than he maie doe;
His pain is harde ye maie se lo!
And Love in no wise would consent
That he have powir to repent,
For though that quicke ye would him slo
Fro Love his herte ne maie nat go.
Now, swet Sir, it is your ese
Him for to angir or disese.
Alas! what may it you avaunce
To doen to him so grete grevaunce?
What worship is' it again him take,
Or on your man a werre make,
Sithe he so lowlie every wise
Is redy as ye luste devise?
If Love have caught him in his lace,
You for t' obaie in every cace,
And ben your subject at your will,
Should ye therfore willin him ill?
Ye should him sparin more all out
Than him that is bothe proude and stout:
Curtesie would that ye succoure
Them that ben meke undir your cure:
His herte is hard that will not meke
Whan men of mekenesse him besteke.

This is certain, sayid Pite,
We se oft that humilite
Bothe ire and also felonie
Venquish'eth, and also' melancolie,
To stondin forthe in soche dureste
This crailte and wickedneste;
Wherefore I praie you, Sir Daungere,
For to maintein no lengir here
Soche cruill werre again your man,
As wholly your's as er he can,
Nor that ye worchin no more wo
On this caitise languishing so,
Whiche woll no more to you trespace,
But put him wholly in your grace:
And his offence ne was but lite;
The god of Love it was to wite
That he your thrall so gretely is:
If ye him harme ye doen amis,
For he hath had full hard penaunce
Sith that ye reft him th' aquaintaunce
Of Bialacoil, his most joie,
Whiche all his pains might acoie:
He was before anoyid sore,
But than ye doublid him well more,

For he of bliſſe hath ben ful bare
Sith Bialacoil was fro him fare:
Love hath to him done grete diſtreſſe,
He hath no nede of more dureſſe:
Voidith from him your ire I rede;
Ye maie not winnin in this dede:
Maketh Bialacoil repaire again
And havith pite on his pain,
For Fraunchiſe woll, and I Pite,
That merciſull to him ye be;
And ſithe that ſhe and I accorde
Have upon him miſericorde,
For I you praie, and eke moneſte,
Nought to refuſin our requeſte,
For he is hard and fell of thought,
That for us two woll doe right nought.
Daungir me might no more endure,
He mekid him unto meſure.
I woll in no wiſe, ſaieth Daungere,
Denie that ye have aſkid here,
It were to grete uncurtiſie;
I woll ye have the companie
Of Bialacoil, as ye deviſe;
I woll him lettin in no wiſe.
To Bialacoil than went in hie
Fraunchiſe, and ſaied full curtiſlie,
Ye have to long yben deignous
Unto this lovir and daunge'rous,
Fro him to withdrawe your preſence,
Whiche hath doe to him grete offence,
That ye not would upon him ſe,
Wherfore a ſorowfull man is he:
Shape ye to paie him and to pleſe,
Of my love if ye woll have eſe:
Fulfill his will: ſith that ye knowe
Daungir is dauntid and brought lowe
Through helpe of me and of Pite
You dare no more aſerde to be.
I ſhall doin right as ye will,
Saieth Bialacoil, for it is ſkill,
Sith Daungir woll that it ſo be;
Than Fraunchiſe hath him ſent to me.

Bialacoil at the beginning
Saluid me in his comming;
No ſtraungèneſſe was in him ſene
No more than he ne' had wrathid ben;
As faire ſemblaunt than ſhewed he me,
And godely, as aforne did he,
And by the honde withoutin doubt
Within the haie right all about
He lad me with a right gode chere,
All environ on the vergere
That Daungere had me chaſid fro.
Now have I leve ovre' all to go,
Now am I raiſed at my deviſe
Fro hell up unto paradiſe.
Thus Bialacoil of gentilneſſe
With all his pain and buſineſſe
Hath ſhewid me onely of grace
The eſtirs of the ſotè place.
I ſawe the Roſe, whan I was nigh,
Was gretir woxin and more high,
Freſhe and roddy, and faire of hewe,
Of colour evir illiche newe:
And whan I had it longè ſene
I ſawe that through the levis grene
The Roſè ſpred to ſpanniſhing,
To ſene it was a godely thing,
But it ne was ſo ſprede on brede
That men within might knowe the ſede,
For it covert ywas and cloſe
Bothe with the leves and with the Roſe;
The ſtalke was even' and grene upright,
It was therson a godely ſight,
And well the bettir without were
For that the ſede was not yſene:
Full faire it ſprad, the god of Bleſſe,
For ſoche an othir as I geſſe
Aforne ne was, ne more vermaile;
I was abawed for marveile,
For er the fairir that it was
The more I'am boundin in Love's laas.
Long I abode there, ſothe to ſaie,
Til Bialacoil I gan to praie,
Whan that I ſawe him in no wiſe
To me to warnin his ſervice,
That he to me would graunt a thing
Whiche to remembre is well fitting,
This is to ſaine, that of his grace
He would me yeve leiſar and ſpace,
To me that was ſo deſirous
To have a kiſſing precious
Of the ſo godely freſhè roſe
That ſo ſwetely ſmelleth in my noſe;
For if it you diſpleſid nought
I woll gladly, as I have ſought,
Havin a kiſſe therof frely
Of your yeftè, for certainly
I woll none have but by your leve,
So lothe me werre you for to greve.

He ſayid, Frende, ſo God me ſpede,
Of Chaſtite I have ſoche drede,
Thou ſhouldeſt not warnid be for me,
But I dare not for Chaſtice;
Again her dare I not miſdoe,
For alwaie biddith ſhe me ſo
To yeve no lovir love to kiſſe,
For who thereto may winnen, i-wiſſe
He of the ſurplus of the praie
May live in hope to get ſome daie;
For who ſo kiſſing maie attain
Of lov'is pain hath (ſoth to ſain)
The beſt and the moſte avinaunt,
And erneſt of the reminaunt.
Of his anſwere I ſighid ſore,
I durſte aſſaie him tho no more,
I had ſuche drede to greve him aie;
A man ſhould not to muche aſſaie
To chaſe his frende out of meſure,
Nor put his life in avinture;
For no man at the firſt ſtroke
Ne may not fel adoune an oke,
Nor of the reiſins have the wine
Till grapes be ripe and well a-fine,

Be ſore empreſſed, I you enſure,
And drawin out of the preſſure:
But I, forpeinid wondir ſtrong,
Thoughtè that I abode right long
Aftir the kiſſe in paine and wo,
Sith I to kiſſe deſirid ſo;
Till that rewing on my diſtreſſe
There comin Venus the goddeſſe,
(Whiche aie weryith Chaſtite)
Came of her grace to ſocour me,
Whoſe might is knowin ferre and wide,
For ſhe is mothir of Cupide,
The god of Love, as blinde as ſtone,
That helpith lovirs many ones
This lady brought in her right honde
Of brenning fire a blaſing bronde,
Whereof the flame and hotè fire
Hath many' a lady in deſire
Of love ybrought, and ſore yhette,
And in her ſervice her herte ſette.
This lady was of gode entaile,
Right wondirful of apparaile;
By her atire ſo bright and ſhene
Men might perceivin well and ſene
She was not of religioun;
Nor I n'il makin mencioun
Nor of her robe nor of treſour,
Of broche ne of her riche attour,
Ne of her girdle' about her ſide,
For that I n'il not long abide;
But knowith well that certainly
She was arrayid richily;
Devoide of pride certaine ſhe was;
To Bialacoil ſhe went a paas,
And to him ſhortely in a clauſe
She ſayid, Sir, what is the cauſe
Ye ben of porte ſo daungirous
Unto this lovir and dainous,
To graunt him nothing but a kiſſe?
To warne it him ye done amiſſe,
Sithe well ye wotin how that he
Is Love's ſervaunt, as ye may ſe,
And hath beaute, wher through he is
Worthy of love to have the blis.
How he' is ſemely beholde and ſe,
How he is faire, how he is fre,
How he is ſote and debonaire,
Of agè yonge, luſty and faire:
There is no lady ſo hauteine,
Ducheſſe, counteſſe, ne chaſtèlaine,
That I n'olde her ungodely
For to refuſe him uttirly.
His brethe is alſo gode and ſwete,
And his lippes roddy; are thei mete
Only to plaine and not to kiſſe?
Graunt him a kiſſe of gentilneſſe.
His teth arne alſo white and clene;
Me thinkith wrong withoutin wene
If ye now warne him, truſtith me,
To grauntè that a kiſſe have he;
The laſſe ye helpe him that ye haſte,
And the more timè ſhul ye waſte.
Whan the flame of the very bronde
That Venus brought in her right honde
Had Bialacoil with his hete ſmete
Anone he bade me without lete,
And grauntid me the Roſe to kiſſe,
Than of my paine I ganne to liſſe,
And to the Roſe anon went I,
And kiſſid it ful faithfully.
Nede no man aſke if I was blith
Whan the ſavour ſo ſofte and lith
Stroke to mine hert withoutin more,
And me alleggid of my ſore,
So was I ful of joye and bliſſe;
It is faire ſuche a floure to kiſſe;
It was ſo ſote and ſavirous
I might not be ſo anguiſhous
That I mote glad and joly be;
Whan that I do remembre me
Yet evre' among (ſothly to ſaine)
I ſuffre noie and mochil paine.

The ſe may nevir be ſo ſtill
But with a litill winde at will
May ovirwhelme and tourne alſo
As it were wode in wawis go;
Aftir the calme the trouble ſone
Mote folow, and chaunge as the mone.
Right ſo fareth Love, that felde in one
Holdeth his ancre, for right aneue
Whan thei in eſe wene beſt to live
They ben with tempeſt all fordrive.
Who ſervith Love can tell of wo
The ſtoundmele joye mote ovirgo;
Now he hurtith and now he cureth,
For ſelde in o pointe Love endureth.
Now it is right me to procede
How Shame gan medle and take hede,
Through whom ſel angirs I have hade,
And how the ſtrongè wall was made,
And the caſtell of brede and length,
That god of Love wan with his ſtrength:
Al this in Romaunce will I ſet,
And for no thing ne will I let,
So that it liking to her be
That is the floure of all beaute,
For ſhe may beſt my labour quite
That I for her love ſhal endite.
Wickid Tonge, whiche that the covine
Of every lovir can devine
Worſte, and aie adèith more ſomdele,
(For wickid tonge ſaith nevir wele)
To mewarde bare he right grete hate,
Eſpying me erly and late,
Til he hath ſene the gretè chere
Of Bialacoil and me ifere:
He ne might not his tonge withſtonde
Worſe to reportin than he fonde,
He was ſo ful of curſid rage:
It ſat him wele of his linage,
For him an Iriſhe woman bare:
His tonge was filid ſharpe and ſquare,
And right poignaunt, and right kerving,
And wondir bittir in ſpeking;
For whan thàt he me gan eſpie
He ſwore (affirming ſikirly)

Bitwene Bialacoil and me
Was ill aquaintaunce and prive:
He spake therof so folilie
That he awakid Jelousie,
Whiche all afraied in his rising,
Whan that he herdè the jangling,
He ran anon as he were wode
To Bialacoil there that he stode,
Whichè had levir in this cas
Have ben at Reines or Amias
For fote-hote in his felonie
To him thus saidè Jelousie;
" Why hast thou ben so negligent
" To kepin, whan I was absent,
" This vergir here lefte in thy warde?
" To me thou haddist no regarde
" To trust (to thy confusion)
" Him thus, to whom suspection
" I have right grete, for it is nede,
" Ias well shewid by thè dede:
" Grete faute in the now have I founde;
" By God anon thou shalt be bounde,
" And fastè lockin in a toure,
" Withoutin refuite or secoure.

" For Shame to long hath be the fro;
" Ovir sonè she was agè;
" Whan thou hast lost both drede and fere
" It semid well she was not here,
" For she was bèsy in no wise
" To kepin the and to chastice,
" And for to helpin Chastite
" To kepe the rosir, as thinketh me,
" For than this boie knave so boldly
" Ne shouldè nat have be hardy,
" Ne in this vergir had suche game,
" Which now me tournith to grete shame."

Bialacoil n'is what to sale,
Ful faine he would have fled awaie,
For fere have hyid, ne'ere that he
All sodainly toke him with me;
And whan I sawe that he had so
This Jelousie takin us two,
I was astoned, and knewe no rede,
But fledde away for very drede.
Than Shame came forth ful simpilly;
She wende have trespaced ful gretely,
Humble of her porte, and made it simple,
Wering a vaile in stede of wimple,
As nonnis done in ther abbey:
Bicause her hert was in affray
She gan to speke within a throwe
To Jelousie right wondir lowe.
First of his grace she him besought,
And sayid, Sir, ne levith nought
Wickid Tongè, that false espie,
Which is so glad to faine and lie;
He hath you made through flatiring
On Bialacoil a false lesing;
His falsnesse is not nowe a newe,
It is to longe that he him knewe;
This ne is not the firstè daie,
For Wickid Tonge hath custome aie
The yongè folkis to bewrie,
And false lesingis on 'hem lie.
Yet nere-thelesse I se among
That the soignè it is so long
Of Bialacoil, hertis to lure
In Lov'is service for to' endure,
Ydrawing suchè folke him to
That he hath nothing with to do,
But in sothnesse I trowè nought
That Bialacoil had er in thought
To do trespace or vilanie,
But for his mothir Curtisie
Hath taught him evir for to be
Gode of aqueintaunce and prive,
For he lovith none hevinesse,
But mirth and play, and all gladnesse;
He hatith eke allè trechours,
And soleine folke and envious,
For ye wele wetin how that he
Wol evir glad and joyful be
Honestly with folkè to pley:
I have be negligent in fey
To chastise him, therfore now I
Of herte ycrie you here mercy,
That I have ben so rechiles
To tamin him withouten lees;
Of my foly I me repent;
Now wol I whole set mine entent
To kepin bothè low and still
Bialacoil to do your will.
O Shame! o Shame! saide Jelousie,
To be bitrashed grete drede have I;
Lecherie hath yclombe so hie,
That almost blerid is mine eie:
No wondir is if drede have I,
Ovir all reignith Lechery,
Whose might ygrowith night and dey
But in cloistre and in abbey;
Chastite' is verried ovir all,
Therefore I woll with sikir wall
Close both the rosis and rosere;
I have to long in this manere
Lefte 'hem unclosid wilfully,
Wherfore I am right inwardly
Sorowfull, and repentè me;
But now thei shall no lengir be
Unclosid; and yet I drede sore
I shall repentè ferthirmore,
For thè game goith all amis;
Counsaile I mustè newe i-wis:
I have to long ytrustid the,
But now it shal no lengir be,
For he may best in every coste
Decevil that men trustin moste:
I' se well that I am nigh shent
But if I set my full entent
Some remedie for to purveie,
Wherfore closin I shall the wey
From them that woll the Rose espie;
And come to waite me vilonie;
For now in gode faith and in trouth
I wol not lettin for no flouth,

To live the more in sikernesse,
Do make anon a fortiresse,
Than close the rosis of gode savour;
In middis shal I make a tour
To put Bialacoil in prison,
For evir I drede me of treson:
I trow I shal him kepè so
That he shal have no might to go
About to makin companie
To them that thinke of vilanie,
Ne to no suche as hath ben here
Aforne, and found in him gode chere,
Whiche han assailid him to shende,
And with ther towandise to blende:
A folè is eith to begile;
But may I live a litil while
He shal forthinke his faire semblaunt;
And with that worde came Drede Avaunt,
Which was abashed, and in grete fere
Whan he wist Jelousie was there;
He was for drede in suche affray
That not a worde durste he say,
But quaking stode ful stil alone,
(Til Jelousie his way was gone)
Save Shamè, that him not forsoke;
Both Drede and she ful sorè quoke,
That at the lastè Drede abraide,
And to his cosin Shamè saide:
Shamè, (he said) in sothfastnesse
To me it is gret hevinesse
That the noise is so ferre ygo,
And eke the sclaundir, of us two;
But sithin that it is befall,
We maie it not againè call
Whan onis sprongin is a fame;
For many' a yere withoutin blame
We have ben, and many a day,
For many' an Aprill, many' a May,
We han ypassid nothing shamed,
Til Jelousie hath us yblamed
Of mistrust and suspection
Causelesse, without encheson:
Go we to Daungir hastily,
And let us shewe him opinly
That he hath not aright ywrought
Whan that he settè not his thought
To kepin bettir the purprise;
In his doing he is not wise;
He hath to us do gretè wrong,
That hath suffirid now so long
Bialacoil to have his will
Allè his lustis to fulfill:
He must amende it uttirly,
Or els shal he vilainously
Exilid be out of this londe;
For he the werre maie not withstonde
Of Jelousie, nor bere the grefe,
Sithe Bialacoile is at mischefe.

To Daungir, Shame and Drede anon
The rightè way ben both ygon;
The chorle thei foundin 'hem aforne
Ligging undir an hawethorne;
Undir his hede no pilowe was
But in the stede a trusse of gras;
He slombrid, and a knappe he toke,
Til Shamè pitously him shoke,
And grete manace on him gan make.
Why slepist thou whan thou should wake?
(Quod Shame) thou doest us vilanie
Who trustith the he doth folie
To kepè rosis or bothoms
Whan thei ben faire in ther fesons:
Thou arte woxe to familiere
Wher thou should be straunge of chere
Stoute of thy porte, redy to greve:
Thou doest gret folie for to leve
Bialacoil here inne to call
The yonger man to shenden us all:
Though that thou slepe we mowin here
Of Jelousie grete noise here:
Art thou now late? rise up an hie,
And stoppe sone and delivirly
Allè the gappis of the hay;
Do no favour I do the pray:
It fallith nothing to thy name
To' make fayre semblaunt where thou mayste blame.

If Bialacoil be swete and fre,
Doggid and fel thou shouldist be,
Forward and outragious i-wis;
A chorle chaungith that curteis is:
This have I herde left in saying,
That man ne maie for no daunting
Make a sperhauke of a bosarde:
Al men wol hold the for musarde
That debonaire have foundin the:
It fitteth the nought curteis to be:
To do men plesaunce or servise
In the it is recreaundise:
Let thy werkis fere and nere
Be like thy name, whiche is Daungere.
Than als abashid in shewe
Anon spake Drede, right thus saying,
And sayid, Daungir, I drede me
That thou ne woltè besy be
To kepin that thou hast to kepe;
Whan thou shouldest wake thou art a-slepe
Thou shalt be grevid certainly
If the aspyin Jelousie,
Or if he findè the in blame;
He hath to day assailid Shame,
And chased away with grete manace
Bialacoil out of this place,
And swerith shortly that he shall
Enclose him in a sturdy wall;
And al is for thy wickidnesse,
For that the failith straungenesse;
Thine hert I trowe be failid all;
Thou shalt repent in speciall,
If Jelousie the sothè knewe,
Thou shalt forthinke and sorè rewe.
With that the chorle his clubbe gon shake,
Frowning his eyin gan to make,
And hidous chere, as man in rage;
For yre he brent in his visage:

Whan that he herde him blamid so
He ſaid, Out of my wit I go,
To be diſconſite I have grete wrong;
Certis I have now lived to long
Sithe I may not this cloſir kepe:
Al quicke I would de dolvin depe
Yf any man ſhall more repayre
This gardin for foule or fayre;
Mine hert for ire goith a-fere
That I let any entre here:
I have do foly now I ſe,
But now it ſhal amended be:
Who ſettith fote here any more
Truly he ſhall repent it ſore,
For no man more into this place
Of me to entre ſhall have grace;
Levir I had with ſwerdis twaine
Throughout mine hert in every vaine,
Percid to be with many' a wounde
Than ſlouthe ſhobld in me be founde:
From hennisforth by night or dey
I ſhall defende it if I may
Withoutin any excepcion
Of eche manir condicion,
And if I it any man graunte
There holdith me for recreaunte:

Than Daungir on his fete gan ſtonde
And hent a burdon in his honde;
Wroth in his ire ne left he nought,
But through the vergir he hath ſought
If he might findin hole or trace
Where through that me mote forth by pace;
Or any gappe, he did it cloſe;
That no man might touchin a Roſe
Of the roſir allè about,
He ſhittith every man without,
Thus day by day Daungir is wers,
More wondirfull and more divers,
And fellir eke than ever' he was,
For him ful oft I ſinge alas!
For I ne may nought through his ire
Recovir that I moſte deſire;
Mine hert, alas! wol breſt a-two,
For Bialacoil I wrathid ſo;
For certainly in every membre
I quake whan that I me remembre
Of the bothom whiche that I wolde
Ful oft a day ſene and beholde;
And when I thinke upon the kiſſe,
And how much joie and how much bliſſe,
I hadde through the ſavour ſwete,
For want of it I grone and grete:
Me thinketh I ſele yet in my noſe
The ſotè ſavour of the Roſe,
And now I wote that I mote go
So ferre the freſhè flouris fro,
To me ful welcome were the dethe,
Abſence therof (alas! me ſlethe;
For whilom with this Roſe, alas!
I touchid noſe, and mouthe, and face,
But now the deth I muſt abide:
But Love conſent an othir tide
That onis I touche maie and kiſſe
I trow my paine ſhal nevir liſſe;
Theron is all my covetiſe,
Whiche brent my hart in any wiſe;
Now ſhal repaire againe ſighing,
Long watche on nightes, and no ſleping,
Thought in wiſhing, turment, and wo,
With many' a tourning to and fro,
That halfe my paine I cannot tell,
For I am fallin into hell
From paradiſe and welthe; the more
My turment grevith, more and more
Anoyith now the bittirneſſe
That I to forne have felte ſwetneſſe:
And Wickid Tonge throughe his falſhede
Ycauſith all my wo and drede;
On me he lieth a pitous charge,
Bicauſe his tongè was to large.
Now is it time ſhortly that I
Tel you ſomthing of Jelouſy,
That was in grete ſuſpection:
About him leſte he no maſon
That ſtone could laie, ne no querrour,
He hirid 'hem to make a tour;
And firſt the roſis for to kepe
About 'hem mede he a diche depe,
Right wondir large, and alſo brode,
Upon the whichè alſo ſtode
Of ſquarid ſtone a ſturdy wall,
Whiche on a cragge was foundin all,
And right grete thickneſſe eke it bare;
About it was yfoundid ſquare
An hundrid fadome' on every ſide;
It was al liche both long and wide:
Leſt any time it were aſſailed
Ful wel about it was batailed,
And rounde environ eke were ſet
Ful many a riche and faire tournet:
At every cornir of this wall
Was ſet a tour full principall,
And everiche had without fable
A portcoliſe defenſable,
To kepe of en'emies, and to greve
That there ther forcè would yprave.
And eke amiddè this purpriſe
Was made a tour of grete maiſtriſe,
A fairir ſaugh no man with ſight,
Largè and wide, and of grate might:
Thei draddè nought nonè aſſaut
Of ginn or gonn, nor of ſkaffaut:
The tempereure of the mortete
Was made of lycoure wondir dere,
Of quicklime perſaunt and egre,
Which temprid was with vinegre.
The ſtone was harde of adamaunt
Wherof thei madè the foundemaunt;
The tour was roundè made in compas;
In al this world no richir was,
Ne bettir ordained therewithall:
About the tour was made a wall,
So that betwixt that and the toure
Roſis were ſet of ſwete ſavoure,
With many roſis that thei bere:
And eke within the caſtil were

Springoldis, gonnes, bowes, and archers,
And eke about at the corners
Men seinin ovir the wall stonde
Gret engins, which ywere nere honde,
And in the kernils here and there
Of arblastirs grete plentie were;
None armour mighte ther stroke withstonde,
It were soly to prese to honde;
Without the diche were listis made
With wal batailid large and brade,
For men and horse should not attaine
To nigh the diche ovir the plaine.
Thus Jelosie hath environ
Yfett about his garnison
With wallis rounde and dichè depe,
Onely the rosir for to kepe,
And Daungir bothe erly and late
The keys kept of the uttir gate,
The whiche opened towarde the est,
And he had with him at the lest
Thurty servauntes echone by name.
That othir gate was kept by Shame,
Whiche opinid, as it was couthe,
Towardis the parte of the southe,
Sergeauntes assignid were here to
Full many, her will for to do:
Than Dredè had in hér baillie
The keping of the constable'rie
Towarde the north I understonde,
That opened upon the lefte honde,
The whiche for nothing may be sure
But if she do her besy cure
Erly on mor'we', and also late,
Strongly to shette and barre the gate.
Of every thing that she may se
Drede is aferde where so she be,
For with a puffe of litill winde
Drede is astonied in her minde,
Therfore for steling of the Rose
I rede her nat the yate unclose:
A soul'is flight would make her fle,
And eke a shadowe, if she' it se.

Than Wickid Tonge, full of envy,
With soudiers of Normandy,
As he that causith all debate,
Was kepir of the fourthè gate,
And also to the tothir thre
He went ful oft for to se.
Whan his lotte was to walke a night
His instrumentis would be dight
For to blowin and makin soune
Oftir than he hath enchesoune,
And walkin oft upon the wall,
Cornirs and wickittes ovir all
Ful narowe serchin and espie:
Though he nought sonde yet would he lie
Discordaunt er fro armonie,
And dissonid fro melodie;
Controve he would, and soulè faile
With hornpipis of Cornèwaile;
In floitis made he discordaunce,
And in his musike, with mischaunce!
He wouldè seine with notis newe
That he ne sonde no woman trewe,
Ne that he sawe nere in his life
Unto her husbonde a trewe wife,
Ne none so ful of honeste
That she n'il laugh and mery be
Whan that she hereth or may espie
A man spekin of lecherie;
Everiche of 'hem hath some vice;
One is dishoneste, t'other nice;
Yf one be ful of vilanie,
An othir hath a liov'rous eie;
If one be ful of wantonesse,
Another is a chidiresse.
Thus Wickid Tonge, God yeve him shame!
Can put 'hem everichone in blame
Without desert, and causilesse:
He lieth though thei ben giltilesse;
I have pity to sene the sorowe
That wakith bothe evin and morowe
To innocentes doth suche grevaunce,
I pray God yeve him evil chaunce!
That he evir so besy is
Of any woman to' leine amis.
Eke Jelousie may God confounde!
That hath makid a toure so rounde,
And made about a garison,
To sette Bialacoil in prison,
The whiche is shette there in the tour,
Ful long to holdè ther sojour,
There for to livin in penaunce;
And for to do him more grevaunce,
Whiche hath ordainid Jelousie,
An olde vecke for to espie
The manir of his governaunce,
The whiche devil in her infaunce
Had lernid all of Lov'is arte,
And of his pleyis take her parte:
She was expert in his servise;
She knewe eche wrenche and every gise
Of Love, and every secret wile;
It was right harde her to begile.
Of Bialacoil she toke aie hede,
That er he liveth in wo and drede
He kepte him coye and eke prive,
Lest that in him she hadde se
Any lite soly countinaunce,
For she knew all the olde daunce.
And aftir this whan Jelousie
Had Bialacoil in his baillie,
And shette him up that was so fre,
For sure of him he would ybe,
He trustith sore in his castell,
The strongè werke him sikith well;
He dradde nat that no glotons
Should stele his rosis or bothoms;
The rosis weren assurid all,
Defencid with the strongè wall:
Now Jelousie full well may be
Of drede devoide in liberte;

Whether that he or ſlepe or wake
Of his roſis may none be take.

But I (alas!) now morne ſhall
Bicauſe I was without the wall:
Ful mochil dole and mone I made;
Who ſo had wiſt what wo I had
I trowe he would have had pite;
Love all to dere had ſolde me;
The gode that of his love had I
I went about it al queintly,
But nowe through dubling of my paine
I ſe he woll it ſell again,
And me a newe bargain lere,
The whiche all out the more is dere
For the ſolace that I have lorne
Than I had it nevir aforne:
Certain I am full like in dede
To him that caſte in yerth his ſede,
And hath joie of the newe ſpringing
Whan it grenith in the ginning,
And is ſo faire and freſhe of floure,
Luſtie to ſene, ſote of odoure,
But er he it in ſhevis ſhere
Maie fall wethir that ſhall it dere,
And makin it to fade and fall
The ſtalke, the greine, and flouris all,
That to the tiller is fordoen,
The hope he had conceved to ſone.
I drede certaine that ſo fare I,
For hope and travaile fikirly
Ben me birafte all with a ſtorme:
The floure n'ill ſedin of my corne,
For Love hath ſo avauncid me,
Whan I began my privite
To Bialacoil all for to tell,
Whom I ne founde froward ne fell,
But toke agre all whole my plaie;
But Love is of ſo harde affaie,
That all at ones he revid me
Whan I wened beſt above to', have be.
It is of Love as of Fortune,
That chaungith oft, and n'ill contune,
Whiche whilom will on folke ſmile,
And glombe on 'hem an othir while;
Now frende now foe thou ſhalt her fele,
For a twincling tournith her whele.
She can writhin her hedde awaie;
This is the concourſe of her plaie,
She can areiſe that doith mourne,
And whirle adoune and ovirtourne
Who ſittith hieſt but as her luſt:
A fole is he that woll her truſt,
For it is I that am come doune
Through charge and revolucioun;
Sithe Bialacoil mote fro me twin,
Shette in her priſon yonde within,
His abſence at mine herte I fele,
For all my joie and all mine hele
Twas in him and in the Roſe,
That but you woll, whiche him doeth cloſe,
Opin, that ſo I maie him ſe,
Love woll not that I curid be
Of the painis that I endure,
Nor of my cruill avinture.

Ah, Bialacoil, mine own dere!
Though thou be now a priſonere,
Kepith at leſt thine herte to me;
Suffir not that it dauntid be,
Ne let not Jelouſie' in his rage
Puttin thine herte in no ſervage:
Although he chaſtice the without,
And make thy bodie to him lout,
Have herte as harde as diamaunt,
Stedfaſt and ſtout, and naught pliaunt:
In priſon though thy bodie be
At large kepe thine herte fre:
A trewe hert ne will not plie
For no manace that it maie drie:
If Jelouſie doith the pain
Quite him his wile thus again,
To venge the at leſt in thought,
If othir waie thou mayiſt nought,
And in this wiſe full ſubtillie
Worchin and winne the maiſtiry.
But yet I am in grete affraie
Leſt thou ſholdeſt nat doe as I ſaie;
I drede thou canſt me grete maugre
That thou enpriſoned art for me,
But yet right nought for my treſpas,
For through me nere diſcovered was
Yet thing that ought to be ſecre:
Well more annoie is in me
Than is in the of this miſchaunce,
For I endure more hard penaunce
Than any man can ſaine or thinke,
That for the ſorowe' almoſte I ſinke:
Whan I remembir me' of my wo
Full nigh out of my witte I go.
Inward mine herte I fele blede,
For comfortleſſe the deth I drede:
Owe I nat well to have diſtreſſe
Whan falſe through ther wickidneſſe,
And traitours, that arne envious,
To noien me be ſo coragious?
Ah, Bialacoil! full well I ſe
That thei 'hem ſhape to deceve the,
To make the buxum to ther lawe,
And with ther corde the to drawe
Where ſo 'hem luſt, right at ther will;
I drede thei have the brought there till:
Withoutin comfort thought me ſlaeth;
This game would bring me to my deth,
For if that I your gode will leſe
I mote be dedde, I maie not cheſe,
And if that thou foryete me
Mine herte ſhall nere in liking be,
Nor elliſwhere findin ſolace:
If I be put out of your grace,
As it ſhall nevir ben I hope,
Than ſhuldin I fall in wanhope.
Alas, in wanhope! naie, parde,
For I woll nere diſpeirid be:
If Hope me faile, than alle am I
Ungracious and unworthy:

In Hope I woll comfortid be,
For Love, whan he betaught her me,
Sayid that Hope where so I go
Should aie be relese to my wo.
But what and she my balis bete,
And be to me curteis and swete?
She is in nothing full certain;
Lovirs she put in full grete pain,
And makith 'hem with wo to dele:
Her faire beheste decevith sele,
For she woll behote sikirly
And failin aftir uttirly.
Ah! that is a full noious thing,
For mony' a lovir in loving
Hangeth upon her, and trustith fast,
Whiche lese ther travaile at the last.
Of thing to comme she wote right nought,
Therefore if it be wisely sought
Her counsaile folie is to take;
For many times whan she woll make
A full gode syllogisme, I drede
That aftirwarde there shall in dede
Folowe an ill conclusion:
This put me in confusion,
For many times I have it sene
That many have begilid bene
For trust that thei have set in Hope,
Whiche fell 'hem aftirward a-slope.

But nath'less yet gladly she wold
That he that woll him with her hold
Had all timis her purpose clere
Withoutin deceipt any where;
That she desirith sikirly;
Whan I her blamed I did foly.
But what availith her gode will
Whan she ne maie staunche my stound ill?
That helpith lite that she maie doe,
Out take beheste unto my wo,
And hestè certain in no wise
Without isete is not to preise.
Whan heste and dede a sondir vary
Thei doin a gretè contrary:
Thus am I possid up and doune
With dole, thought, and confusioune;
Of my disese there is no nomber,
Daungir and Shamè me encomber,
Dredè also and Jelosie,
And Wickid Tong, full of envie,
Of whiche the sharpe and cruill ire
Full oft me put in grete martire:
Thei have my joiè fully let,
Sith Bialacoil thei have beshet
Fro me in prison wickidly,
Whom I love so entierly,
That it wollin my banè be
But I the sonir maiè him se.
And yet moreovir, worst of all,
There' is set to kepe, soule her befall!
A rimplid vecke ferre ronne in age,
Frouning and yel'we' in her visage,
Whiche in awaite lieth daie and night,
That none of him maie have a sight.

Now mote my sorowe enforced be
Ful sothe it is that Love yafe me
Thre wondir yeftis of his grace,
Whiche I have lorne now in this place,
Sithe thei ne maie withoutin drede
Helpin but lite who takith hede,
For here availith no Swetè Thought,
And Swetè Speche helpith right nought,
The thirde was callid Swete Loking,
That now is lorne without lesing.
Yeftis were faire, but nat for thy
Thei helpin me but simpilly
But Bialacoil losid be
To gone at large and to be fre;
For him my life lieth all in dout
But if he come the rathir out.
Alas! I trowe it woll nat ben,
For how should I ere more him sene?
He maie nat out, and that is wrong,
Bicause the tourè is so strong:
How should he' out, or by whose prowesse,
Out of so strong a fortiresse?
By me certain it n'ill be doe,
God wotte I have no witte therto,
But well I wote I was in rage
Whan I to Love did my homage;
Who was the causè (in sothfastnesse)
But her self Damè Idilnesse,
Whiche me conveide through faire praiere
To' entir into that faire vergere?
She was to blamè me to leve,
The whiche now doeth me sorè greve:
A fol'is worde is nought to trowe,
Ne worthe an apple for to lowe;
Men should him snibbe bittirlie
At primè temps of his folie;
I was a fole, and she me leved,
Through whom I am right nought releved:
She accomplishid all my will
That now me grevith wondir ill.

Reson me sayid, What should fall
A fole my self I maie well call,
That Love aside I had not laied,
And trowid that Dame Reson saied;
Reson had bothè skill and right
Whan she me blamed with all her might
To medle' of Love, that hath me shent,
But certain now I woll repent.

And should I repent? naie, parde,
A false traitour than should I be:
The devil's engins would me take
If evir I Love would forsake,
Or Bialacoil falsly betraie.
Should I at mischief hate him? naie,

Sithe he now for his curtiſie
Is in priſon of Jelouſie;
Curtiſie certain did he me
So moche it maie not yoldin be:
Whan he the haie paſſin me lete
To kiſſe the Roſe faire and ſwete
Should I therefore conne him maugre?
Naie, certainly, it ſhall nat be,
For Love ſhall nevir, ſave gode will,
Here of me ne through worde or will
Offence or complaint more or leſſe
Neithir of Hope nor Idleneſſe;
For certis it were wrong that I
Hatid 'hem for ther curtiſie.
There is not els but ſuffre' and thinke,
And wakin whan I ſhouldè winke,
Abide in hope till Love through chaunce
Sende me ſoccour or allegaunce,
Expectaunt aie till I maie mete
To gettin mercie of that ſwete.
Whilom I thinke how Love to me
Sayid that he would take at gre
My ſervice if uppacience
Yeaufid me to doen offence;
He ſaied, If thanke I ſhall it take,
And high maiſtir eke they make,
If Wickidneſſe ne reve it the,
But, ſone, I trowe that ſhall nat be.
Theſe were his wordis by and by,
It ſemed he lovid me truely.
Now is there not but ſerve him wele
If that I thinke his thanke to fele:
My gode, mine harme, lithe whole in me,
In Love maie no defaute ybe,
For true Love ne failed nevir man;
Sothly the faute mote nedis than,
As God forbide, be founde in me,
And how it cometh I can not ſe.
Now let it gone as it maie go,
Wher Love woll ſoccour me or ſlo,
He maie do wholly on me his will;
I am ſo ſore ybounde him till
From his ſervice I maie not flene,
For life and deth withoutin wene
Is in his hande; I maie nat cheſe;
He maie me doe bothe winne and leſe:
And ſithe ſo ſore he doeth me greve,
Yet if my luſt he would acheve,
To Bialacoil godely to be,
I yeve no force what fell on me;
For though I die, as I mote nede,
I praie Love of his godelihede
To Bialacoil doe gentilneſſe,
For whom I live in ſoche diſtreſſe
That I mote dyin for penaunce:
But firſt withoutin repentaunce
I' will me confeſſe in gode entent,
And make in haſte my teſtament,
As lovirs doin that felen ſmerte.
To Bialacoil leve I mine herte
All whole, withoutin departing
Or doubleneſſe or repenting.

Coment Raiſon vient a L'amant.

Thus as I madin my paſſage
In compleint and in cruill rage,
And I n'ot where to find a leche
That couthe unto mine helping eche,
Sodainly again comin doun
Out of her toure I ſawe Reſoun,
Diſcrete and wiſe, and full pleſaunt,
And of her porte full avenaunt:
The right waie ſhe toke unto me,
Whiche ſtode in grete perplexite,
That was poſſid in every ſide,
That I n'iſt where I might abide,
Till ſhe, demurely ſadde of chere,
Sayid to me as ſhe came nere;
Mine ownè frende, art thou agreved?
How is this quarell yet acheved
Of Lov'is ſide? anon me tell
Haſt thou not yet of love thy fill?
Art thou nat werie' of thy ſervice
That the hath grevid in ſoche wiſe?
What joie haſte thou in thy loving?
Is it a ſwete or bittir thing?
Canſt thou yet cheſin, let me ſe,
What beſt thy ſuccour mightin be?
Thou ſerviſt a full noble lorde,
That maketh the thrall for thy rewarde,
Whiche aie reneweth thy tourment,
With folie ſo he hath the blent:
Thou fell in miſchief thilkè daie
Whan thou diddiſt, the ſothe to ſaie,
To him obeiſaunce and homage:
Thou wroughtiſt nothing as the ſage
Whan thou became his liegè man;
Thou diddiſt a grete folie than:
Thou wiſtiſt nat what fell therto,
With what lorde thou haddiſt to doe:
If that thou haddiſt him well knowè
Thou haddiſt nought be brought ſo lowe,
For if that thou wiſte what it were
Thou n'oldiſt ſerve him halfe a yere,
No, nat a weke nor halfe a daie,
Ne yet an houre without delaie:
Ne nevir I lovid paramours,
His lordſhip is ſo full of ſhours:
Knowiſt him ought?—
L'amaunt. Ye, Dame, parde.—
Raiſoun. Naie, naie.—*L'amaunt.* Yes I.—
Raiſoun Wherefore, let ſe.—
L'amannt. Of that he ſayid I ſhould be
Glad to have ſoche a lorde as he,
And maiſtir of ſoche ſeignorie.—
Raiſoun. Knowiſt him no more?—
L'amaunt. Naie, certis, I,
Save that he yaſe me rulis there,
And went his waie I ne wiſt where,
And I abode bounde in balaunce:
Lo, there a noble cogniſaunce!
Raiſoun.
But I woll that thou knowe him now
Ginning and ende, ſithin that thou

Art ſo anguiſhous and ſo mate,
Disfigurid out of aſtate,
There maie no wreche have more of wo,
Ne catiſe non endurin ſo;
It were to every man fitting
Of his lorde to have knowleging,
For if thou knewe him out of dout
Lightly thou ſhouldiſt ſcapin out
Of thy priſon that marrith the.

L'amaunt.

Ye, Dame, ſithin my lorde is he,
And I his man made with mine honde
I wouldè right faine undirſtonde
To knowin of what kinde he be,
If any would enformè me.

Raiſoun.

I would (ſayid Reſon) the lere,
Sithe thou to lerne haſt ſoche deſire,
And ſhewin the withoutin fable
A thing that is not demonſtrable.
Thon ſhalt knowe withoutin ſcience
And withoutin experience
The thing that maie not knowin be,
Ne wiſt ne ſhewed in no degre,
Thou maieſt the ſothe of it not witten
Although in the it were ywritten;
Thou ſhalt not knowin therof more
While thou art rulid by his lore,
But unto him that Love will ſlie
The knottè maie unclosid be
Whiche hath to the, as it is founde,
So longe to knitte and not unbounde;
Now ſet well thine entencion
To here of love the deſcripcion.

Lovè it is an hateful peſe,
A fre' acquitance without releſe,
And through the fret full of falſhedę
A ſikerneſſe all ſet in drede;
In herte is a diſpering hope,
And full of hope it is wanhope;
A wiſe wodneſſe, and void reſon,
A ſwetè perill in to droun,
And hevie burthin light to bere,
A wickid wawe awaie to were;
It is Charybdis perilous,
Diſagreable and gracious;
It' is diſcordaunce that can acorde,
And accordaunce unto diſcorde;
It is conning without ſcience,
And wiſedome without ſapience,
Witte withoutin diſcrecion,
Havoire without poſſeſſion;
It is like hele and whole ſickneſſe,
A truſt drounid and dronkineſſe,
And helth all full of maladie,
And charite full of envie,
And angre full of aboundaunce,
And a full gredie ſuffiſaunce,
Delite right full of hevineſſe,
And drerineſs-full of gladneſſe,
Bittir ſweteneſſe and ſwete errour,
Right evill ſavoured gode ſavour,
A fin that pardone hath withinne,
And pardone ſpottid without ſinne,
A paine alſo it is joious,
And felonie right pitous,
Alſo a plaie that ſelde is ſtable,
And ſtedfaſtneſs right mevable,
A ſtrength weikid to ſtonde upright,
And a febleneſſe full of might,
Witte unaviſid, ſage folie,
And joiè full of tourmentrie,
A laughtir it is weping aie,
Reſt that travailith night and daie,
Alſo a ſwetè hell it is,
And a ſorowfull paradis,
A pleſaunt gaile and eſie priſoun,
And full of froſtis ſomir ſeſoun,
Primè temps full of froſtis white,
And Maie devoide of all delite,
With ſere braunchis bloſſoms ungrene,
And newe fruict filled with wintir tene;
It is a flowe maie not forbere,
Ragges ribanid with gold to were,
For all ſo well woll Love be ſette
Undir raggis as riche rotchette,
And eke as well by amorettes
In mourning blacke as bright burnettes,
For none is of ſo mokill priſe,
Ne no man foundin is ſo wiſe,
Ne no maſt ſo high of parage,
Ne no man founde of witte ſo ſage,
No man ſo hardie ne ſo wight,
Ne no man of ſo mokill might,
None ſo fullfillid of bountè,
That he with love maie dauntid be;
All the worldè holdith this waie,
Love makith all to gone miſwaie
But if it be thei of evill life,
Whom Genius curſid, man and wife,
That wrongly werke again Nature;
None ſoche I love, ne have no cure
Of ſoche as Lov'is ſervauntes ben,
And woll nat by my counſaile fleen,
For I ne preiſin that loving
Where through man at the laſt ending
Shall call 'hem wretchis full of wo,
Love grevith 'hem and ſhendith ſo;
But if thou wolt well Love eſchewe
For to eſcape out of his mewe,
And make all whole the ſorowe ſlake,
No bettir counſaile maieſt thou take
Than thinke to flein wel i-wis,
Maie nought helpe els, for wit thou this,
If thou flie it ſhall flie the,
Folowe' it and folowen ſhall it the.

L'amaunt.

Whan I had herid Reſon ſain,
Whiche had yſplit her ſpeche in vain,
Dame, (ſayid I) I dare well ſaie
Of this avaunt me well I maie,
That from your ſcole ſo deviaunt
I am, that nere the more avaunt
Right nought I am through your doocting
I dulle undir your diſcipline;

I wot no more than I wiſte ever,
To' me ſo contrarie and ſo fer
Is every thing that ye me lere,
And yet I can it all by ſtivere;
Mine herte ſoryeteth thereof right nought;
It is ſo writtin in my thought,
And depe gravin it is ſo tender,
That all mine herte I can it render,
And rede it ovir communely,
But to my ſelf lewdiſt am I.

But ſithe ye love diſcrivin ſo,
And lacke and preiſe it bothe two,
Definith it into this letter,
That I maie thinke on it the better,
For I herd nevir defined here,
And wilfully I would it lere.—
Raiſon. If love be ſerchid well and ſought,
It is a ſickeneſſe of the thought,
Annexid and knedde betwixt tweine,
Which male and female with o cheine,
So frele bindeth, that thei n'ill twinne
Wedir thereof thei leſe or winne:
The rote ſpringith through hote brenning
In to diſordinate deſiring
For to kiſſin and to embrace,
And at ther luſt them to ſolace;
Of othir thing Love retchith nought,
But ſetteth ther herte and all ther thought
More for ther delectacioun
Than any procreacioun
Of other fruict by engendrure,
Whiche love to God is nat pleſure,
For of ther bodie fruicte to get
Thei yeve no force, thei are ſo ſet
Upon delite to plaie in fere;
And ſome have alſo this manere
To fainin 'hem for lovè ſeke;
Soche love I preſe not at a leke,
For paramours thei do but faine,
To lovin truely thei diſdaine;
Thei falſin ladies traitourſly,
And ſwerne 'hem othis uttirly,
With many' a leſing, many' a fable,
And all thei findin diſceivable.
And whan thei han ther luſt ygetten
The hote ernes thei all foryetten;
Women the harme byin full ſore;
But men this thinkin evirmore,
The laſſe harme is, ſo mote I the,
Diſceive them than diſceivid be,
And namily where thei ne maie
Findin none othir mene ne waie,
For I wote well in ſothfaſtneſſe,
That who doeth now his buſineſſe
With any woman for to dele
For any luſt that he maie ſele,
But if it be for engendrure
He doeth treſpaſſe I you enſure,
For he ſhould ſettin all his will
To getten a likely thing him till,
And to ſuſtain, if that he might,
And kepin forth by kind'is right
His owne likèneſſe and ſemblable;
For bicauſe all' is corrumpable,
And failin ſhould ſucceſſioun,
Ne were the generacioun,
Our ſect'is ſtrenè for to ſave,
Whan fadre' or mothir arne in grave
Ther childrin ſhulde whan they ben dede
Full diligent ben in ther ſtede
To uſe that worke on ſoche a wiſe
That one maie through an othir riſe;
Therefore ſet kinde therein delite,
For men therein ſhould 'hem delite,
And of that dedè be not erke,
But oftè ſithis haunt that werke,
For none would drawe thereof a draught
Ne were delite whiche hath him caught;
This had ſubtill Dame Nature,
For none goeth right I the enſure,
Ne hath entten whole ne parfite,
For ther deſire is for delite,
The whiche fortenid creſe, and eke
The plaie of love, for oft thei ſeke
And thrall 'hem ſelf, thei be ſo nice,
Unto the prince of every vice,
For of eche ſinne it is the rote
Unlefull luſt, though it be ſote,
And of all evill the racine,
As Tullius can determine,
Whiche in his time was full ſage,
In a boke whiche he made of age,
Where that more he ypraiſith Elde,
Though he be crokid and unwelde,
And more of commendacioun
Than youth in his diſcripcioun;
For youth ſet bothe man and wife
In all perill of ſoule and life,
And perill is, but men have grace,
The perill of youth for to pace
Without any deth or diſtreſſe,
It is ſo full of wildèneſſe,
So oft it doeth ſhame and domage
To him or unto his linage,
It ledith man now up now doun,
In mokill diſſolucioun,
And maketh him love ill companie,
And lede his life diſrulilie,
And halte him paied with none eſtate;
Within himſelf is ſoche debate
He chaungith purpoſe and entent,
And yaltè into ſome covent,
To livin aftir ther empriſe,
And leſith fredome and fraunchiſe
That Nature in him had yſet,
The whiche again he maie not get,
If there he make his manſion,
For to abide profeſſion;
Though for a time his herte abſent
It maie not faile he ſhall repent,
And eke abidin thilkè daie
To leve' his abite and gon his waie,
And leſeth his worſhip and his name,
And dare not come again for ſhame,
But all his life he doeth ſo mourne,
Bicauſe he dare not home retourne,

Fredome of kinde ſo loſt hath he
That nevir maie recurid be,
But that if God him grauntin grace
That he maie[illegible]er he hennis pace,
Contein und[illegible]obedience,
Through the vertue of pacience;
For youth ſet man in all folie,
In unthrift and in ribaudrie,
In lecherie and in outrage,
So oft it chaungith of corage:
Youth ginnith oft ſoche a-gain
That maie not end withoutin pain:
In grete perill is Youth-hede,
Delite ſo doeth his bridill lede:
Delite this hangith, drede the nought,
Bothe mann'is bodie and his thought;
Onily through youth'is chambere,
That to doen ill is cuſtomere,
And of naught ellis takith hede
But onely folkis for to lede
Into diſport and wildèneſſe
So froward is it from ſadneſſe,
But elde ydrawith 'hem therfro;
Who wote it not he maie well go,
And mo of 'hem that now arne old,
That whilom youth yhad in hold,
Whiche yet remembre' of tendir age
How it 'hem brought in many' a rage,
And many' a folie therin wrought,
But now that elde hath 'hem through ſought
Thei repent 'hem of ther folie
That youth 'hem put in jeopardie,
In perill and in mokill woe,
And made 'hem oft amiſſe to doe,
And ſewin evill companie
And riot and advouteries.

But Eldè gan againe reſtraine
From ſuchè foly and refraine,
And ſet men by her ordinaunce
In gode rule and in governaunce;
But ill ſhe ſpendith her ſerviſe,
For no man wol her love ne preiſe;
She is hatid, this wot I welè,
Her acqueintaunce would no man ſele,
Ne han of Eldè companie,
Men hate to be of her alie,
For no man wold becomin olde,
Ne die whan he is yonge and bolde;
And Elde mervailith right gretely
Whan thei remembre 'hem inwardly
Of many' a perillous empriſe
Whiche that thei wrought in ſondry wiſe,
How evir thei might without blame
Eſcape awaie withoutin ſhame,
In youth without any domage,
Without repreſe of ther linage,
Leſſe of membre, ſheding of blode,
Perill of deth, or loſſe of gode.
Wotiſt thou nat where Youth abit,
That men ſo preiſin in ther wit?
With Delite ſhe yhalte ſojour,
For both thei dwellin in o tour:

As longe as Youthe is in ſeſon
Thei dwellin in one manſion:
Delite of Youth woll have ſervice
To do what ſo he woll devise,
And youth is redy evirmore
For to obey for ſmerte or ſore
Unto Delite, and him to yeve
Her ſervice while that ſhe maie live.
Where Elde abitte I wol the tell
Shortily, and no while ydwelle,
For thidir behoveth the to go,
Yf Deth in youthè the not ſlo;
Of this journey thou maiſte not faile.
With her Labour and eke Travaile
Lodgid ben, with Sorow and Wo,
That nevir out of her court go,
Paine and Diſtreſſe, Sickeneſſe and Ire,
And Melan'coly, that angry ſire,
Ben of her paleis ſenatoure,
Groning and grutching her herbegeours:
The day and night her to tourment
With cruill Deth thei her preſent,
And tellin her erliche and late
That Death ſtondeth armid at her gate;
Than bring thei to her remembraunce
The foly dedes of her enfaunce,
Whiche cauſin her to mourne in wo
That youth hath her begilid ſo,
Whiche ſodainly awaie is haſted;
She weped the time that ſhe hath waſted,
Complaining of the preteritte
And the preſent, that nat abitte,
And of her oldè vanite,
That bat aforne her ſhe maie ſe
In the future ſome ſmale ſocoure
To leggin her of her doloure,
To graunt her time of repentaunce,
For her ſinnis to do penaunce,
And at the laſt ſo her governe,
To winne the joye that is eterne,
Fro whiche go backwarde youth her made,
In vanite to drowne and wade;
For preſent time abidith nought,
It is more ſwifte than any thought;
So litill while it doth endure
That there is ne compte ne meſure.
But how that evir the game go,
Who liſt love joye and mirth alſo
Of love, be it he or ſhe,
Or hie or lowe, who ſo it be,
In frute thei ſhouldin 'hem delite,
Ther parte thei maie not ellis quite,
To ſave 'hem ſelf in honeſte;
And yet full many one I ſe
Of women, ſothly for to ſaine,
That deſirin and wouldin faine
The plaie of love, thei be ſo wilde,
And not coveite to go with childe;
And if with childe thei be perchaunce,
Thei wol it holde a grete miſchaunce;
But what ſo evir wo thei ſele
Thei wol not plainin, but concele,
But it be any ſoſe or nice,
In whomè that ſhame hath no juſtice;

For to delite echone thei drawe
That haunt this worke, both hie and lawe,
Save ſuche that arne worth right nought,
That for money wol be ybought;
Suche love I preiſin in no wiſe
Whan it is given for covetiſe;
I preiſe no woman, though ſhe' is wode,
That yeveth her ſelfe for any gode,
For litill ſhould a man ytelle
Of her that wil her body ſelle,
Be ſhe a maide or be ſhe wife,
That quicke wol ſelle her by her life,
How faire chere that ever ſhe make,
He is a wretche I undirtake
That love ſuche one, for ſwete or ſoure,
Though ſhe him called her paramoure,
And laugheth on him, and maketh him feſt,
For certainly no ſuche beſt
To be lovid is nat worthy,
Or berin the name of Drury;
None ſhould her pleſe, but he wer wode,
That wol diſpoile him of his gode:
Yet nathèleſſe I wol not ſaie
That ſhe for ſolace and for plaie
Maie a jewil or othir thing
Take of her lov'is fre yeving,
But that ſhe aſke it in no wiſe
For drede of ſhame or covetiſe;
And ſhe of hers maie him certaine
Without ſclaundir yevin againe,
And joyne ther hertes togidir ſo
In love, and take and yeve alſo:
Trowe nat that I wollin 'hem twinne
Whan in ther love there is no ſinne;
I wol that thei togidir go,
And done al that thei han ado,
As curtis ſhould and debonaire,
And in ther love berin 'hem faire,
Withoutin vice, both he and ſhe,
So that alwaie in honeſte
Fro ſoly Love to kepe 'hem clere,
That brennith hertis with his fere,
And that ther love in any wiſe
Be devoide of all covetiſe.
Gode love ſhould engendrid be
Of trewè hert, juſte and feere,
And not of ſuche as ſet ther thought
To have their luſt and ellis nought,
So are thei caught in Lov'is lace
Trewly for bodily ſolace;
Fleſhely delite is ſo preſent
With the, that ſet al thine entent
Withoutin more, what ſhould I gloſe?
For to gettin and have the Roſe,
Whiche makith the ſo mate and wode,
That thou deſireſt none other gode:
But thou art not an inche the nerre,
But evre' abideſt in ſorroue' and werre,
As in thy face it is yſene;
It makith the bothe pale and lene;
Thy might, thy vertue, gothe awaie,
A ſory geſt in godè faie
Thou harboriſt than in thine inne,
The god of Love whan thou let inne;
Wherfore I rede thou ſhette him oute,
Or he ſhal greve the out of doute,
For to thy profite it wol turne,
If he no more with the ſojourne.
In grete miſcheſe and ſorow ſonken
Ben hertis that of love arne dronken,
As thou peraventure knowen ſhall
Whan thou haſt loſt thy time all,
And ſpent thy thought in idilneſſe,
In waſte, and woful luſtineſſe.
Yf thou maiſt live the time to ſe
Of love for to delivered be
Thy time thou ſhalt bewepè ſore,
The whiche nevir thou maiſt reſtore,
For time yloſt, as men may ſe,
For nothing may recovered be:
And if thou ſcape yet at the laſte
Fro Love that hath the ſo faſte
Yknitte and boundin in his lace,
Certaine I holde it but a grace;
For many one, as it is ſeine,
Have loſte and ſpent alſo in veine
In his ſervice without ſocour
Body and ſoule, gode and treſour,
And witte and ſtrength, and eke richeſſe,
Of whiche thei had nevir redreſſe.

L'amant.

Thus taught and prechid hath Reſon,
But Love yſpilte hath her ſermon,
That was ſo impid in my thought
That her doctrine I ſet at nought,
And yet ne ſaide ſhe nevre' a dele
That I ne underſtode it wele
Wordè by worde the matir all;
But unto Love I was ſo thrall,
Whiche callith ovir all his praie,
He chaſith ſo my thoughtis aie,
And holdeth min herrte undir his ſele
As truſty and trewe as any ſtele,
So that I no devocion
Ne haddè in the wiſe ſermon
Of Dame Reſon, ne of her rede
I toke no ſojour in mine hede,
For allè yede out at one ere
That in that othir ſhe did lere;
Fully on me ſhe loſt her lore;
Her ſpeche me grevid wondir ſore.

That unto her for ire I ſaide,
For angir as I did abraide,
Dame, and as it your will algate
That I not love but that I hate
All men, as ye me now do teche?
For if I do aftir your ſpeche,
Sith that you ſeine love is not gode,
Than muſt I nedis ſay with mode,
Yf I it leve, in hatrid aie
Livin, and voidin love awaie
Ferrè from me a ſinful wretche,
Yhatid of allè that tetche,
I may not go none othir gate,
For either muſt I love or hate,
And if I hatin men of newe
Morè than love it wol me rewe,

As by your prechſing ſemith me,
For Love nothing ne praiſith the:
Ye yeve gode counſaile ſikirly
That prechith me al day that I
Ne ſhould not Lov'is lore alowe;
He were a fole woulde you not trowe;
In ſpeche alſo ye han me taught
Anothir love that knowen is naught,
Whiche I have herde you not repreve:
To love eche othir, by your leve,
If ye would definin it me,
I wouldin gladly here, to ſe
At the leſt if I mowin lere
Of ſondry lovis the manere.

Raiſon.

Certis, frende, a grete fole art thou,
Whan that thou nothing wolt alow
Whiche that I for thy profite ſaie;
Yet wol I ſaie the more in faie,
For I am redy at the leſt
To accompliſhin thy requeſt;
But I n'ot where it wol aveile;
In vaine perav'enture I travaile.
Love there is in ſondrie wiſe,
Right as I ſhall the here dèviſe.
For ſome love leful is and gode,
I mene not that whiche maketh the wode,
And bringith the in many' a fitte,
And raviſheth fro the al thy witte,
It is ſo marveilous and queint;
Wiſh ſuche love be no more aqueint.

Comment Raiſon diffiniſt Aunſcte.

Love of frendſhippe alſo there is
Whiche makith no man don amis,
Of will yknitte betwixin two,
That wol not breke for wele ne wo,
Whiche longe is likely to contune,
Whan wil and godes ben in commune,
Groundid by Godd'is ordinaunce,
All whole withoutin diſcordaunce,
With them yholding commaunce,
Of al ther gode in charite,
That there be none exceptioun
Through chaunging of ententioun,
That eche helpe othir at ther nede,
And wiſely hele both worde and dede,
Trewe of mening, devoide of ſlouthe,
For wit is nought withoutin trouthe,
So that the t' one dare all his thought
Saine to his frende, and ſparin nought,
As to him ſelfe, without dreding
To be diſcovered by wreying,
For glad is that conjunctioun
Whan there is none ſuſpectioun
Betwixin 'hem whome thei wold prove,
That trewe and parfite weren in love;
For no man may be amiable
But if he be ſo ferme and ſtable
That Fortune chaunge him not ne blinde,
But that his frende alway him finde
Bothe pore and riche in one eſtate,
For if his frende through any gate
Wol complaine of his poverte
He ſhould not bide ſo long til he
Of his helping doth him require,
For gode dede done thorough prayire
Is ſolde and bought to dere i-wis
To hert that of grete valure is,
For hert fulfilled of gentilneſſe
Can evil demene his diſtreſſe;
And man that worthy is of name
To aſkin oftin hath grete ſhame.
A gode man brennith in his thought
For ſhame whan that he aſkith ought;
He hath grete thought, and dredith aie
For his diſeſe whan he ſhal praie
His frende leſt that he warnid be
Till he preve his ſtabilite;
But whan that he hath foundin one
That truſty is and trewe as ſtone,
And hath aſſayid him at all,
And founde him ſtedfaſt as a wall,
And of his frendſhippe be certaine,
He ſhal him ſhewe bothe joie and paine,
And all that he dare thinke or ſaie,
Withoutin ſhame, as he well maie,
For how ſhould he aſhamid be
Of ſuche an one as I tolde the?
For whan he wot his ſecret thought
The third ſhall know therof right nought,
For twey in nombre' is bet than thre
In every counſaile and ſecre:
Repreve he dredith nevre' a dele
Who that beſet his wordis wele,
For every wiſe man out of drede
Can kepe his tong till he ſe nede.
And ſolis can not holde ther tonge;
A fol'is belle is ſone yronge;
Yet ſhall a trewe frende doin more
To helpe his felowe of his ſore,
And ſocour him whan he hath nede
In all that he may done in dede,
And gladdir that he him pleſith
Than his felowe that he eſith:
And if he do nat his requeſt
He ſhal as mochil him moleſt
As his felowe, bicauſe that he
Maie not fulfill his volunte
All fully as he hath required.
If both the hertis Love hath fired
Bothe joye and wo thei ſhall departe,
And take evinly eche his parte,
Halfe his anoye he ſhal have aie,
And comforte him what that he maie,
And of his bliſſe parte ſhal he,
If love wollin departid be.

And whilom of this unite
Spake Tullius in a dite,
A man ſhould makin this requeſt
Unto his frende that is honeſt,
And he godely ſhould it fulfill,
But it the more were out of ſkill,
And otherwiſe not graunt therto,
Except only in cauſis two.
Yf men his frende to deth would drive,
Let him be beſy to' ſave his live.

Alſo if men wollen him aſſaile,
Of his worſhip to make him faile,
And hindrin him of his renoun,
Let him with ful entencioun
His devir done in eche degre,
That his frendè ne ſhamid be.
In theſe two oaſis with his might,
Taking no kepe to ſkill nor right,
As ferre as love may him excuſe,
This ought no man for to refuſe.
This love that I have told to the
Is nothing contrarie to me;
This wol I that thou folowe wele,
And leve the t'othir every dele;
This love to vertue al entendeth,
The t'othir folis blent and ſhendeth.
An othir love alſo there is
That is contrary unto this,
Which deſire is ſo conſtrainid
That it ne is but will fainid;
Away fro trouth it doth ſo varie
That to gode love it is contrarie,
For it maymith in many wiſe
Sikè hertis with covetiſe;
All in winning and in profite
Suche love yſettith his delite:
This love ſo haungith in balaunce,
That if it leſe his hope perchaunce
Of lucre that he' is ſet upon
It woll failin and quench anon,
For no man maiè be amorous,
Ne in his living vertuous,
But if he lovin more in mede
Men for 'hem ſelfe than for ther gode;
For love that profite doth abidè
Is falſe, and bidith not to tide:
Soche love comith of Dame Fortune,
That litil while woll contune,
For it ſhall chaungin wondir ſone,
And take eclips as doth the mone,
Whan that ſhe is from us ylet
Through erth, that betwixin is ſet
The ſonne and her, as it may fall,
Be it in partie or in all:
The ſhadowe makith her bemes merke,
And her hornis to ſhewin derke
That part where ſhe hath loſt her light
Of Phebus fully and the ſight,
Til whan the ſhadowe' is ovir paſte
She' is enlumined ageinis faſte
Through the brightnes of the ſonne bemes,
That yevith to' her again her lemes:
That love is right of ſuch nature,
Now it is faire and now obſcure,
Now bright, now clipſy of manere,
And whilom dimme and whilom clere,
As ſone as poverte ginnith take,
With mantil and with wedis blake
Hidith of love the light away,
That into night it tournith day,
It may not ſein Richeſſe ſhine
Till that the blacke ſhadowis fine,
For whan that Richeſſe ſhinith bright
Love recovereth ayen his light,
And whan it failith he wol flit,
And as ſhe grevith ſo grevith it.
Of this love herith what I ſaie:
The riche men are ylovid aie,
And namely tho that ſparande bene,
That wol not waſhe ther hertis clene,
Of the filthe nor of the vice
Of gredy brenning avarice.
The riche man ful fond is i-wis
That wenith that he lovid is;
If that his hert it undirſtode
It is not he; it is his gode:
He may wel wetin in his thought
His gode is loved and he right nought,
For if he be a nigarde eke
Men wol not ſet by him a leke,
But hatin him, this is the ſothe.
Lo what profite his catil dothe!
Of every man that may him ſe
It getteth him nought but enmite,
But he amende him of that vice,
And know himſelfe he is not wiſe.
Certis he ſhould aie frendly be
To get him love, alſo ben fre,
Or els he is not wiſe ne ſage,
No more than is a gote ramage.
That he not lovith his dede proveth,
Whan he his richeſſe ſo well loveth
That he wol hide it aie and ſpare,
His porè frendis ſene forfare,
To kepin aie his ill purpoſe,
Till that for drede his eyin cloſe,
And til a wickid deth him take
Him had levir a ſondre ſhake,
And let al' his limmes a ſondre rive,
Than leve his richeſſe in his live;
He thinketh to part it with no man;
Certain no love is in him than,
For how ſhould love within him be
Whan in his hert is no pite?
That he treſpaſith well I wate,
For eche man knowith his eſtate,
For wel him ought to be reproved
That lovith nought ne is not loved.
But ſithe we arne to Fortune comen,
And hath our ſermon of her nomen,
A wondir will I tell the now,
Thou herdiſt nere ſuche one I trow;
I n'ot where thou me levin ſhall,
Although ſothfaſteneſſe it be all,
As it is writtin, and is ſothe,
That unto men more profite dothe
The frowarde fortune and contraire
Than doth the ſote and debonaire;
And if the thinke it is doutable,
It is through argument provable,
For Fortune debonaire and ſofte
Yfalſith and begilith ofte,
For liche a mothir ſhe can chaſtie,
And milkin as doth a norice,
And of her gode to him ydeles,
And yeveth 'hem parte of her jewelis,
With grete richis and dignite,
And 'hem ſhe hoteth ſtabilite

In a ſtate that is nothing ſtable,
But chaunging aie and variable,
And fedith hem with glory veine,
And worldely bliſſe nothing certeine:
Whan ſhe 'hem ſettith on her whele
Than wenin thei to be right wele,
And in ſo ſtable ſtate withall
That nevir thei wene for to fall;
And whan thei ſette ſo high to be
Thei wene to have in certainte
Of hertly frendis to grete nombre,
That nothing might their ſtate encombre;
Thei truſt 'hem ſo on every ſide,
Wening with 'hem thei would abide
In every perill and miſchaunce
Withoutin chaunce or variaunce
Bothè of catil and of gode,
And alſo for to ſpende ther blode,
And al ther membris for to ſpill,
Onily to fulfill ther will:
Thei maken it whole in many wiſe,
And hotin 'hem their full ſervice,
How ſore ſo that it do 'hem ſmerte
Into ther very nakid herte;
Herte and hande alſo whole thei give,
For al the time that thei may live,
So that with this ther flatiry
Thei makin folis glorifie
Onely of ther wordis ſpeking,
And han chere of a rejoyſing,
And trow 'hem as the Evangile;
And it is al falſhede and gile,
As thei ſhal afterwardis ſe;
Whan thei arne fal in poverte,
And ben of gode and catil bare,
Than ſhould thei ſene whe frendis ware,
For of an hundrid certainly,
Nor of a thouſande full ſcarſly,
Ne ſhall thei finde unnethis one
Whan poverte is comen upon.
For thus Fortune that I of tell,
With men whan that her luſt to dwell,
Maketh 'hem to leſe ther conisaunce,
And noriſheth 'hem in ignorsunce.
But frowarde Fortune and perverſe,
Whan high eſtates ſhe doth reverſe,
And makith 'hem to toumble doune
Of her whele with a ſodaine tourne,
And from ther richeſſe dothe 'hem fle,
And plongith 'hem in poverte,
As a ſtepmothir envious,
And laieth a plaiſtir dolorous
Unto ther hertis woundid egre,
Whiche is not tempered with vinegre,
But with poverte' and indigence,
For to ſhewe by experience
That ſhe is Fortune verilie,
In whom no man ne ſhould affie,
Nor in her yeftis have ſiaunce,
She is ſo ful of variaunce.
Thus can ſhe makin hie and lowe,
Whan thei from richeſſe arne throwe,
Fully to knowin without were
Frende of affecte and frende of chere,
And whiche in love weren trew and ſtable,
And whiche alſo weren variable,
Aftir Fortunè ther goddeſſe,
In poverte', either in richeſſe,
For all that yeveth here out of drede
Unhappy yberith it in dede,
For Infortunè lette not one
Of frendis whan Fortune is gone,
I mene tho frendis that woll ſle
Anone as entrith poverte;
And yet thei wol not leve 'hem ſo,
But in eche place where that thei go
Thei callin 'hem wrethe, ſcorne, and blame,
And of ther miſhappe 'hem diffame,
And namely ſuche as in richeſſe
Pretendith moſte of ſtableneſſe,
Whan that they ſawe 'hem ſet on lofte,
And werin of hem ſucoured ofte,
And moſt iholpe in al ther nede,
But now thei take no maner hede,
But ſeine in voice of flatirie
That now appereth ther folie
Ovir al wher ſo that thei fare,
And ſinge, Go, farewel, Feldefare.
Allè ſuche frendis I beſhrewe,
For of trewe frendis ther be to fewe,
But ſothfaſt frendes, what ſo betide,
In every fortune wollen abide;
Thei han their hertes in ſuch nobleſſe
That thei n'il love for no richeſſe,
Nor for that Fortune may 'hem ſende
Thei wollen 'hem ſocour and defende,
And chaungin for ſofte ne for ſore;
For who his frende loveth evirmore,
Though men drawe ſwerdis him to ſle,
Thei may not hewe ther love a two;
But if in caſe that I ſhall ſay,
For pride and ire leſe it he may,
And for reprove by nicete,
And diſcovering of privite
With tongè wounding, as felon,
Through venemous detraccion.
Frende in this caſe wol gon his way,
For nothing greve him more ne may,
And for nought ellis wol he fle
If he love in ſtabilite:
And certaine he is well begone
Among a thouſande that findeth one,
For there ne may be no richeſſe,
Ayenſt frendſhip of worthineſſe,
For it ne may ſo high attaine
As may the valoure, ſothe to ſaine,
Of him that lovith trewe and well:
Frendſhip is more than is catell,
For frende in courte aie bettir is
Than peny is in purſe certis,
And than is Fortune miſhaping,
Whan upon men ſhe is fabling
Thorough miſſturning of her chaunce,
And caſtith 'hem out of balaunce.
She maketh through her adverſite
Men ful and clerly for to ſe
Him that is frende in exiſtence
From him that is by apparence,

For infortune makith anone
To know thy frendis fro thy fone
By experience right as it is,
The whiche is more to praise i-wis
Than in muche richesse and tresour,
For more depe profite and valour
Poverte', and suche adversite
Before, than doeth prosperite,
For that one yeveth conisaunce,
And t'othir gevith ignoraunce.
And thus in poverte' is in dede
Trouthè declarid fro falshede,
For faint frendis it wol declare,
And trewe also, what way they fare;
For whan he was in his richesse
These frendis ful of doubleneſse
Offirid him in many wise
Ther herte and body, and service,
What would he then have you to 'have brought
To knowin opinly ther thought,
That he now hath so verely sene?
The lasse begiled he should have bene
And he had than percevid it,
But Richesse n'olde not let him wit;
Wel more avaunta[illegible] doeth him than,
Sithe that it makith him a wise man,
The grete mischese that he perceveth
Than doeth richesse, that him deceveth:
Richesse riche ne ymakith nought
Him that on tresour set his thought,
For richesse stonte in suffisaunce,
And nothing stonte in haboundaunce,
For suffisaunce all onily
Makith menne to live richily.

For he that hath but mitchis tweine,
Ne value in his whole demeine,
Liveth more at ese, and more is riche,
Than doith he whiche that is chiche,
And in his barne hath, soth to saine,
An hundrid mavis of whete graine,
Though he be chapman or marchaunt,
And have of golde many besaunt,
For in the getting he 'hath suche wo,
And in the keping drede also,
And sette ere more his besinesse
For to encrese and nat to lesse,
For to augment and multiply,
And though on hepes that lie him by,
Yet nevir shall make his richesse
Asseth unto his gredinesse;
But the pore man that retchith nought
Save of his livelode in his thought,
Whiche that he getteth with his travaile,
He dredith nought that it shall faile,
Though he have little world's gode,
Mete and drinke, and ese sode,
Upon his travaile and living,
And also suffisaunt clothing,
Or if in sickeneſse that he fall,
And lothe mete and drinke withall,
Though he have not his mete to buie,
He shall bethinke him hastily
To put him out of all daungere,
That he of mete hath no mistere,
Or that he maie with little eke
Be foundin while that he is seke,
Or that men shall him barne in haste
To live till his sickneſse be paste
Unto some maisondewe beside:
He caste nought what shall him betide;
He thinkith nought that evre' he shall
Into any sickeneſse yfall.

And though it fall, as it maie be,
That all betime sparin shall he
As mokill as shall to' him suffice
While he is sicke in any wise,
He doith for that he woll be
Contentid with his poverte
Withoutein nede of any man:
So moche in little have he can
He is apaide with his fortune,
And for he n'ill be importune
Unto no wight ne onerous,
Nor of ther godesse covetous,
Therfore he spareth, it mai well ben,
His pore estate for to sustene.

Or if him luste not for to spare,
But suffrith forthe as nat yet ware,
At laste it happeneth, as it maie,
All right unto his hastè daie,
And take the worlde as it would be;
For evir in herte thinkith he
The sonir that Deth him yslo
To paradise the sonir go
He shall, there for to live in blisse
Where that he shall no godis misse:
Thidir he hopeth God shall him sende
Aftir this wretchid liv'is ende.
Pythagoras himself reherses,
In a boke that The Goldin Verses
Is cleped, for the nobilite
Of the honorable dite,
Than whan thou goest thy body fro
Ere in the ayre thou shalt up go,
And levin all humanite,
And purely live in diete.
He is a sole withoutin were
That growith have his countrey here.
In yerth is not our countere,
That maie these clerkis seine and se
In Boece of Consolacion,
Where it is makid mencion
Of our contre plaine at the eye
By teching of philosophie,
Where leude men might in lerin wit,
Who so that would translatin it.
If he be suche that can well live
Aftir his rentè maie him yeve,
And not desirith more to have
Than maie fro poverte him save.
A wiseman saied, as we maie sene,
[illegible]o man wretched but he it wene,

Be he a king, knight, or ribaude:
Many' a ribaude is merie' and baude
That ſwinketh and berith daie and night
Many a burthin of grete might,
The whiche doith him leſſe offence
For he that ſuffrith in pacience:
Thei laugh and daunce, thei trippe and ſing,
And laie nought up for ther living,
But in the taverne all diſpendeth
The winning whiche that God 'hem ſendeth;
Than goeth he fardils for to bere
With as gode chere as he did ere:
To ſwinke and travaile' he not fainith,
For to robbin he diſdainith,
But right anon after his ſwinke
He goeth to taverne for to drinke.
All theſe are riche in haboundaunce
That can thus havin ſuffiſaunce
Well more than can an uſerere,
As God well knowith, without were,
For 'an uſurere, ſo God me ſe,
Shall nevir for richeſſe riche be,
But er more pore and indigent,
Scarce, and gredy in his entent.
For ſothe it is, whom it diſpleſe,
There maie no marchaunt live at eſe,
His herte in ſoche a where is ſet
That it quicke brennith for to get,
Ne nevir ſhall though he hath getten,
Though he have golde in garnirs yeten,
For to be nedy he dredeth ſore,
Wherefore to gettin more and more
He ſet his herte and his deſire:
So hote he brennith in the fire
Of covetiſe, that maketh him wode
To purchace othir mennis gode.
He undirfongith a grete pain
That undertaketh to drinke up Sain,
For the more that he drinkith aie
The more he levith, ſothe to ſaie.
Thus is the thruſt of falſe getting,
That laſte evir in coviting,
And the anguiſhe and the diſtreſſe,
With the fire of gredineſſe;
She fightith with him aie and ſtriveth,
So that his herte a ſondir riveth:
Soche gredineſſe him affailith
That whan' he moſte hath moſte he failith.
Phiſiciens and advocates
Goin right by the ſame yates;
Thei ſell ther ſcience for winning,
And haunte ther craſte for grete getting:
Ther winning is of ſoche ſweteneſſe
That if a man fall in ſickeneſſe
Thei are full glad for ther encrece,
For by ther will withoutin leſe
Everiche man ſhouldin be ſeke;
Though thei die thei ſet not a leke;
Aftir whan thei the golde have take
Full little care for him thei make:
Thei would ſowertie were ſicke at ones,
Ye, two hundrid, in fleſhe and bones,
And yet two thouſande, as I geſſe,
For to encreſin ther richeſſe.

Thei woll not worchin in no wiſe
But for lucre and covetiſe,
For phyſicke ginnith firſt by (phi)
The phiſicien alſo ſothly;
And ſithen it goeth fro ſie to ſie
To truſt on 'hem it is folie,
For thei n'il in no manir gre
Doin right nought for charite.
Eke in the ſame ſecte are ſet
All tho that prechin for to get
Worſhips, and honour, and richeſſe;
Ther hertis arne in grete diſtreſſe
That folke livin not holily,
But abovin all ſpecially
Soche as yprechin veinglorie,
And towarde God have no mem'orie,
But forthe as ipocritis trace,
And to ther ſoulis deth purchace,
And outward ſhewing holineſſe,
Though thei be full of curſidneſſe:
Nat liche to the apoſtlis twelve,
Thei deceive othir and 'hem ſelve:
Begilid is the gilir than
For preching of a curſid man:
Though it to othir maie profite
Himſelf it availeth not a mite,
For oft gode predicacioun
Cometh of evill entencioun:
To him nat availeth his preching,
All helpe he othir with his teching,
For where thei gode example take
There is he with veinglorie ſhake.
But let us leven theſe prechours,
And ſpeke of 'hem that in their tours
Hepe up ther golde and faſt yſhet,
And ſore thereon ther hertis ſet:
Thei neither lovin God ne drede;
Thei kepin more than it is nede,
And in ther baggis ſore it binde
Out of the ſunne and of the winde;
Thei puttin up more than nede ware
Whan thei ſene povir folk forfare,
For hungre die, and for cold quake;
God can well vengeaunce thereof take;
The grete miſchivis 'hem aſſaileth,
And thus in gadring aie travaileth;
With mochil pain thei winne richeſſe,
And drede 'hem holdith in diſtreſſe
To kepin that thei gathir faſt:
With ſorowe thei leve it at laſt,
With ſorowe thei bothe die and live
That unto richeſſe ther hertes yeve.
And in defaute of love it is,
As it ſhewith full well i-wis,
For if theſe gredy, ſothe to ſaine,
Lovidin and were loved againe,
And gode love reignid ovir all,
Soche wickidneſſe ne ſhould yfall,
But he ſhould yeve that moſte gode had
To 'hem that weren in nede beſtad,
And live withoutin falſe uſure,
For charite ful clene and pure;
If thei 'hem yeve unto godeneſſe,
Defending 'hem from idilneſſe,

In all this worlde than povir none
We ſhouldin finde I trowe not one.
But chaungid is this worlde unſtable,
For love is ovir all vendable:
We ſe that no man lovith now
But for his winning and for prowe;
And love is thrallid in ſervage
Whan it is ſold for avauntage;
Yet women wol ther bodies ſell:
Soche foules goith to the devill of hell.
Whan Love had tolde 'hem his entent
The baronage to counſaile went.
In many ſentencis thei fill,
And diverſly thei ſaied ther will;
But aftir diſcorde thei accorded,
And ther accorde to Love recorded:
Sir, ſaidin thei, we ben at one,
By even accorde of everichone,
Out take Richeſſe all onily,
That ſwornè hath full hauteinly
That ſhe the caſtill n'ill aſſaile,
Ne ſmite a ſtroke in this battaile
With darte ne mace, ne ſpere, ne knife,
For man that ſpeketh or bereth life,
And blamith your empriſe iwis,
And from our hoſte departid is,
At leſtè waie, as in this plite,
So hath ſhe this man in diſpite;
For ſhe ſaieth he ne loved her never,
And therefore ſhe woll hate him ever;
For he woll gathir no treſore
He hath her wrathe for evirmore;
He' agilte her nere in othir caſe,
Lo here all wholly his treſpaſe!
She ſaieth well that this othir daie
He aſked her leve to gon the waie
That is clepid to moche yeving,
And ſpake full faire in his praying,
But whan he praied her poore was he,
Therefore ſhe warned him the entre,
Ne yet is he not thrivin ſo
That he hath gettin a penie or two
That quietly' is his owne in holde:
Thus hath Richeſſe us all ytolde,
And whan Richeſſe us this recorded
Withoutin her we ben acorded.
And we finde in our accordaunce
That Falſe Semblant and Abſtinaunce,
With all the folke of ther battaile,
Shull at the hindir gate aſſaile
That Wickid Tong hath in keping,
With his Normans full of jangling,
And with him Curteſie and Largeſſe,
That ſhullin ſhewe ther hardineſſe
To the old wife that kept ſo hard
Faire Welcoming within her ward,
Than ſhall Delite and Well-Heling
Yfondin Shame adoun to bring
With all her hoſte erly and late,
Thei ſhull aſſailin that ilke gate;
Ayeniſt Drede ſhall Hardineſſe
Aſſaile and alſo Sikirneſſe,
With all the folke of ther leding,
That nevir wiſte what was ſlaying.

Fraunchiſe ſhall fight and eke Pite
With Daungir ful of cruilte,
Thus is your hoſte ordainid wele;
Doune ſhall the caſtill every dele
If everiche doe his entent,
So that Venus ybe preſent,
Your mothir, full of veſſelage,
That can inough of ſoche uſage;
Withoutin her maie no wight ſpede
This werke neither for worde ne dede,
Therefore is gode ye for her ſende,
For through her maie this worke amende.

Lordinges, my mothir the goddes,
That is my ladie and maiſtres,
Ne is nat all at my willing,
Ne doeth nat all my deſiring;
Yet can ſhe ſometime doen labour
Whan that her luſte in my ſocour,
As my nede is for to atcheve,
But now I thinke her nat to greve:
My mothir is ſhe', and of childhede
I both worſhip her and eke drede,
For who that dredeth ſire ne dame
Shall it abie in bodie' or name:
And nathèleſſe yet connè we
Sende aftir her if nede ybe,
And were ſhe nigh ſhe commin wold;
I trowe that nothing might her hold.
My mothir is of grete proweſſe,
She hath tane many a fortreſſe
That coſt hath many' a pound er this
There I n'as not preſent iwis,
And yet men ſaied it was my dede:
But I come nevir in that ſtede,
Ne me ne liketh, ſo mote I the,
That ſoche tours ben ytake with me;
For why? me thinkith that in no wiſe
It maie be cleped but Marchaundiſe.

Go buie a courſir blacke or white,
And paie therefore, than art thou quite:
The marchaunt owith the right nought
Ne thou him whan thou haſt it bought.
I woll not ſelling clepe Yeving,
For ſelling aſketh no guerdoning;
Here lithe no thanke ne no merite,
That one goth from that othre' all quite;
But this ſelling is not ſemblable;
For whan his horſe is in the ſtable
He maie it ſell again parde,
And winnen on it, ſoche happe maie be,
All maie the manne nat leſe iwis,
For at the leſt the ſkinne is his;
Or ellis, if it ſo betide
That he woll kepe his horſe to ride,
Yet is he lorde aie of his horſe;
But thilkè chafare is well worſe
There Venus entremetith ought,
For who ſo ſoche chaffare hath bought
He ſhall not worchin ſo wiſely
That he ne ſhall leſe uttirly

Bothe his money and his chaffare;
But the ſeller of thilkè ware
The priſe and profite havin ſhall;
Certaine the buier ſhall leſe all,
For he ne can ſo dere it buie
To have lordſhip and full maiſtrie,
Ne havin power to make letting
Neither for yefte ne for preching,
That of his chaffare maugre his
An other ſhall have as moche iwis,
If he woll yeve as moche as he,
Of what countrey ſo that he be,
Or for right nought, ſo happe ymaie,
If he can flattir her to' her paie.
And ben' than ſoche marchaundis wife?
No, but folis in every wiſe:
Whan thei buie ſoche thing wilfully
There thei leſe ther gode folily;
But nathèleſſe this dare I ſaie,
My mothir is not wont to paie,
For ſhe' is neither ſo fole ne nice
To entremete her of ſoche vice;
But truſtith well he ſhall paie all
That repente of his bargaine ſhall,
Whan Poverte' put him in diſtreſſe,
All were he ſcholir to Richeſſe,
That is for me in grete yerning
Whan ſhe aſſenteth to my willing.

But by my mothir Saincte Venus,
And by her fathir Saturnus,
That her engendrid by his life,
But nat upon his weddid wife,
Yet woll I more unto you ſware,
To makin this thing the furere.
Now by that faithe and that beaute
That I owe to' all my brethrin fre,
Of whiche ther n'is wight undir heven
That cant her fadir's namis neven,
So divers and many there be
That with my mothre' have be prive,
Yet woll I ſwere for ſikirneſſe
The pole of helle to my witneſſe,
Now drink I not this yere clarre
If that I lie or forſworne be,
For of the goddes the uſage is
That who ſo him forſwerith amis
Shall that yere drinkin no clarre.
Now have I ſworne inough parde;
If I forſwere than am I lorne;
But I woll nevir be forſworne,
Sithe Richeſſe hath me failid here
She ſhall abie that treſpas dere
At leſtè waie but I her harme
With ſwerde, or ſparth, or with giſarme.
For certis ſithe ſhe loveth not me,
Fro thilkè time that ſhe maie ſe
The caſtill and the toure to ſhake,
In ſorie time ſhe ſhall awake;
If I maie gripe a richè man
I ſhall ſo pulle him if I can,
That he ſhall in a few ſtoundis
Leſe all his markes and his poundis.
I ſhall him make his pens out ſling
But that thei in his garnir ſpring;
Our maidins ſhall eke pluche him ſo
That him ſhall nedin fethirs mo,
And make him ſell his londe to ſpende
But he the bet conne him defende.

Pore men han made ther lorde of me;
Although thei nat ſo mightie be
That thei maie fede me in delite
I woll not have 'hem in diſpite:
No gode man hateth 'hem as I geſſe,
For chinche and feloun is Richeſſe,
That ſo can chaſe 'hem and deſpiſe,
And 'hem defoule in ſondrie wiſe:
Thei loven full bette, ſo God me ſpede,
Than doith the riche chinchy grede,
And ben (in gode faith) more ſtable,
And truir and more ſerviable,
And therefore it ſuffiſith me
Ther gode hertis and ther beaute:
Thei han on me ſet all their thought,
And therefore I foryete 'hem nought.
I woll 'hem bring in grete nobleſſe,
If that I were god of Richeſſe,
As I am god of Love ſothely,
Soche ruthe upon ther plaint have I;
Therefore I muſt his ſuccour be
That painith him to ſervin me,
For if he deied for love of this
Than ſemith in me no love there is.
Sir, ſaied thei, ſothe is every dele
That ye reherce, and we wote wele
Thilke othe to holde is reſonable,
For it is gode and covenable
That ye on riche men han yſworne;
For, Sir, this wote we well beforne,
If riche men doin you homage
That is as folis doen outrage;
But ye ſhull not forſworne ybe,
Ne let therefore to drinke clarrie,
Or piment makid freſhe and newe:
Ladies ſhull 'hem ſoche pepir brewe
If that thei fall into their laas
That thei for wo mowe faine Alas!
Ladies ſhullen ere ſo curteis be
That thei ſhall quite your othe all fre;
Ne ſeketh nevir othir vitaire,
For thei ſhall ſpeke with 'hem ſo faire
That ye ſhall holde you paied full wele,
Though ye you medle nere a dele.
Let ladies worchin with ther thinges,
Thei ſhall 'hem tell ſo fele tidinges,
And move ſo many requeſtis,
By flatterie, that not honeſt is,
And thereto yeve 'hem ſoche thankinges,
What with kiſſing and with talkinges,
That certis if thei trowid be
Shall nevir leve 'hem londe ne ſe
That it n'ill as the moeble fare,
Of whiche thei firſt delivered are.
Now maie you tell us all your will,
And we your heſtis ſhall fulfill.

But falſe Semblant dare not for drede
Of you, Sir, medle' him of this dede,
For he ſaith that ye ben his ſo,
He n'ot if ye woll worche him wo;
Wherefore we praie you all, beau Sire,
That ye forgeve him now your ire,
And that he maie dwell as your man
With abſtinence his dere lemman:
This our accorde and our will now.
Parfei, ſaied Love, I graunt it you
I woll well holde him for my man;
Now let him come: and he forthe ran.
Falſe Semblant, (quod Love) in this wiſe
I take the here to my ſervice,
That thou our frendis helpe alwaie,
And hindre 'hem neither night ne daie,
But doe thy might 'hem to releve,
And eke our en'mies that thou greve:
Thine be this might; I graunt it the;
My king of Harlotes ſhalt thou be:
We woll that thou have ſoche honour:
Certain thou art a falſe traitour,
And eke a thief; ſithe thou were borne
A thouſande times thou art forſworne:
But natheleſſe in our hering,
To put our folke out of doubting,
I bidde the teche 'hem, woſt thou how?
By ſome generall ſigne now,
In what place thou ſhalt foundin be
If that men had miſtir of the,
And how men ſhall the beſt eſpie,
For the to knowe is grete maiſtre:
Tell in what place is thine haunting.
Sir, I have fully divers wonning
That I kepe not reherſid be,
So that ye would reſpitin me,
For if that I tell you the ſothe
I maie have harme and ſhame bothe?
If that my ſelawes wiſtin it
My talis ſhouldin me be quit,
For certaine thei would hate me
If er I knewe ther cruelte,
For thei would ore all hold 'hem ſtill
Of trothe that is again ther will:
Soche talis kepin thei not here;
I might eſtſone buie it full dere
If I ſaied of 'hem any thing
That diſpleſith to ther hering,
For what word that 'hem pricketh or biteth
In that worde non of 'hem deliteth,
All were it goſpell the' Evangile,
That would reprove 'hem of ther gile,
For thei are cruill and hautain;
And this thing wote I well certain,
If I ſpeke ought to paire or loos
Your courte ſhall not ſo well be cloos
That thei ne ſhall wite it at laſt:
Of gode men am I nought agaſt,
For thei woll taken on 'hem nothing
Whan that thei knowe all my mening,
But he that woll it on him take
He woll himſelf ſuſpecious make
That he his life let covirtly
In Gile and in Ypocriſie,
That me' engendrid and yave foſtring.
Thei ma': a full gode engendring,
(Quod Love) for who ſo ſothly tell
Thei engendrid the divell of hell.
But nedely, howſoere it be,
(Quod Love) I will and charge the
To tell anon thy wonning place
Hering eche wight that in this place is,
And what life thou liviſt alſo,
Hide it no lengir now; wherto?
Thou muſt diſcovre' all thy worching,
How thou ſerviſt, and of what thing,
Though that thou ſhouldeſt for thy ſoth-ſaw
Ben all to-betin and to-drawe,
And yet art thou not wont parde;
But natheleſſe though thou betin be
Thou ſhalt not be the firſt that ſo
Hath for ſothſawe yſuffirid wo.
Sir, ſithe that it maie likin you,
Though that I ſhould be ſlain right now,
I ſhall doen your commaundement,
For thereto have I grete talent.
Withoutin wordis mo, right than
Falſe Semblant his ſermon began,
And ſaied 'hem thus in audience:
Barons, take hede of my ſentence.
That wight that liſt to have knowing
Of Falſe Semblant, full of flatt'ring,
He muſt in worldly folke him ſeke,
And certis in the cloiſtirs eke;
I won no where but in 'hem twaie,
But not like evin, ſothe to ſaie:
Shortly, I woll herberowe me
There I hope beſt to hulſtrid be;
And certainly ſikereſt hiding
Is undirneth humbliſt clothing.
Religious folke ben full covert,
Seculer folke ben more appert;
But natheleſſe, I woll not blame
Religious folke, ne 'hem diffame,
In what habite that er thei go;
Religion humble' and true alſo
Woll I not blamin ne diſpiſe,
But I n'ill love it in no wiſe;
I mene of falſe religious,
That ſtout ben and malicious,
That wollin in an habite go
And ſettin not ther herte thereto.

Religious folke ben all pitous,
Thou ſhalt not ſene one diſpitous;
Thei lovin no pride ne no ſtrife,
But humbly thei woll lede ther life,
With whiche folke woll I nevir be,
And if I dwell I faine me
I maie well their habite go;
But me were lever my necke a two
Then let a purpoſe that I take,
What covenaunt that er I make.
I dwell with 'hem that proude ybe,
And full of wiles and ſubtilte,
That worſhip of this worlde coveiten,
And grete nede connin expleiten,

And gon and gadrin grete pitaunces,
And purchaſe 'hem the acqueitaunces
Of men that mightie life maie leden,
And faine 'hem pore, and 'hem ſelf feden
With gode morcils delicious,
And drinkin gode wine precious,
And preche us povert and diſtreſſe,
And fiſhin 'hem ſelf grete richeſſe
With wily nettis that thei caſt:
It woll come foule out at the laſt.
Thei ben fro clene religion went;
Thei make the worlde an argument
That hath a foul concluſion:
I have a robe of religion,
Than am I all religious:
This argument is all roignous;
It is not worth a crokid brere:
Habite ne makith monke ne frere,
But clene life and devocion
Makith gode men of religion.
Nathèleſſe there can none anſwere,
How high that er his hedde he ſhere
With raſour whettid nere ſo kene,
That gile in braunchis cutte thurtene,
There can no wight diſtinct it ſo
That he dare ſaie a word therto.
But what herb'row that ere I take,
Or what ſemblaunt that er I make,
I mene but gile, and folowe that,
For right no more than Gibbe our cat
(That awaiteth mice and rattes to killen)
Ne entende I but to begilen:
Ne no wight maie by my clothing
Wete with what folke is my dwelling,
Ne by my wordis yet parde,
So ſoft and ſo pleſaunt thei be.
Beholde the dedis that I doe,
But thou be blinde thou oughtiſt ſo,
For varie ther wordes fro ther dede
Thei thinke on gile withoutin drede,
What manir clothing that thei were,
Or what eſtate that ere thei bere,
Lerid or leude, lorde or ladie,
Knight, ſquier, burgeis, or bailie.
Right thus while Falſe Semblant ſermoneth
Eft ſonis Love him areſoneth,
And brake his tale in his ſpeking
As though he had him tolde leſing,
And ſaid, What devill is that I here?
What folke haſt thou us nempnid here?
Maie men findin religioun
In worldly habitacioun?
Ye, Sir, it foloweth nat that thei
Should lede a wickid life parfei,
Ne not therefore ther ſoulis leſe
That 'hem to worldly clothis cheſe,
For certis it were grete pite;
Men maie in feculer clothes ſe
Floriſhin holy religioun
Ful many' a ſainct in felde and toun,
With many' a virgine glorious,
Devoute and full religious,
Han died that commin clothe aie beren,
Yet ſainctis nertheleſſe thei weren;
I could reckin you many a ten,
Ye, welnigh all theſe holy women
That men in churchis herry' and ſeke,
Bothe maidins and theſe wivis eke,
That bare ful many' a faire childe here,
Werid alway clothis feculere,
And in the ſame clothes didin they
That ſaintis weren and ben alway.
The ix thouſande maidinis dere,
That beren in heven ther ciergis clere,
Of whiche men redein churche and ſing,
Were take in feculer clothing,
Whan thei recevid martirdome,
And wonnin heven unto ther home.
Gode hert ymakith the gode thought,
The clothing yeveth ne revith nought:
The gode thought and the gode worching
That maketh the religion flouring;
There lieth the gode religioun
Aftir the righte entencioun,
Who ſo ytoke a wethir's ſkinne,
And wrapped a gredy woulfe therinn,
For he ſhould go with lambis white,
Weniſt thou not he would 'hem bite?
Yes; nertheleſſe as he were wode
He would 'hem wirry', and drinke the blode
And wel the rathir 'hem diſceve,
For ſithin thei coude nat perceve
His tregette and his cruilte
Thei would him folow tho he flie.

If there be wolvis of ſuche hewe
Amongis theſe apoſtlis newe,
Thou, holy churche, thou maiſte be wailed;
Sithe that thy cite is aſſailed
Through knightis of thine ownè table
God wot thy lordſhip is doutable:
If thei enforcin it to win
That ſhould defend it fro within
Who might defence ayenſt 'hem make?
Withoutin ſtroke it mote be take
Of trepeget or mangonell,
Without diſplaying of penſell;
And if God n'il done it ſocour,
But let remain in this colour,
Thou muſt thy heſtis lettin be;
Than is there nought but yeldè the,
Or yeve 'hem tribute doutileſs,
And holde it of 'hem to have pees:
But gretir harme betidith the
That thei all maiſtir of it be:
Welcon thei ſcornin the withall,
By day yſtuffin thei the wall,
And al the night thei minin there:
Nay, thou plantin muſt ellis where
Thine impis if thou wolt frute have;
Abide not there thyſelf to ſave.

But now pece; here I turne againe;
I wol no more of this thing ſaine,
Yf I may paſſin me hereby,
For I might makin you wery;

But I wol hetin you alway
To helpe your frendis what I may,
So thei wollin my company,
For thei be ſhent all uttirly;
But if ſo fallin that I be
Oftin with 'hem and thei with me,
And eke my lemman mote thei ſerve,
Or thei ſhul not thy love deſerve
Forſoth I am a falſe traitour;
God judged me for a theſe trechour:
Forſworne I am, but wel nigh none
Wote of my gile til it be done.
Thrpugh me hath many' one deth receved
That my treget ner aperceved,
And yet receveth, and ſhal receve,
That my falſneſſe ſhal nere perceve;
But who ſo doth, if he wiſe be,
Him is right gode beware of me;
But ſo ſtighe is the perceiving,
That al to late comith knowing,
For Proteus, that coude him chaunge,
In every ſhappe homely and ſtraunge,
Coude nevir ſuche gile ne treſoune
As I, for I come nere in toune
There as I might yknowin be
Though men me both might here and ſee;
Ful wel I can my clothis chaunge,
Take one and make an othir ſtraunge;
Now am I knight, now chaſtelaine,
Now prelate, and nowe chapelaine,
Now prieſt, now clerke, and now ſoſtere,
Now am I maiſtir, now ſcholere,
Now monke, now chanon, now baily;
Whatevir miſtir manne am I.
Now am I prince, now am I page,
And can by hert ev'ry language;
Somtimis am I hore and olde,
Now I am yong, and ſtout, and bolde,
Now am I Robert, now Robin,
Now Frere Minor, now Jacobin:
And with me foloweth my loteby
To done me ſolace and comp'any,
That hight Dame Abſtinence, and raigned
In many a queint arraie fained;
Right as it commeth to her liking
I fulfill all her deſiring.
Somtime a woman's clothe take I,
Now am I a maide, now lady:
Somtime I am religious,
Now like an ankir in an hous:
Somtime am I a prioreſſe,
And now a nonne, and now abbeſſe,
And go thorough all regiounes
Yſeking all religiounes.
But to what ordir that I' am ſworne
I take the ſtrawe and bete the corne:
To jolie folke I enhabite
I aſke no more but ther habite.
What wol ye more? in every wiſe
Right as me liſt I me diſgiſe.
Wel can I bere me undir wede,
Unlike is my worde to my dede.
Thus make I into my trappes fall
The folke through my priv'ilegis all
That ben in Chriſtendome a live.
I may aſſoile and I may ſhrive,
That no prelate may lettin me,
All folke where evir thei found be:
I n'ot no prelate maie don ſo
But it the Pope be, and no mo.
That madin thilke eſtabliſhinng:
Now is not this a propre thing?
But were by ſlightis aperceved

. . . . . .

As I was wont, and woſt thou why?
For I did 'hem a tregetry;
But therof yeve I' a litil tale,
I have the ſilvir and the male.
So have I prechid and ake ſhriven,
So have I take, ſo have I yeven,
Through ther foly huſbonde and wife,
That I lede right a joly life:
Through ſimpleſſe of the prelacie
Thei know not all my tregettrie.

But for as moche as man and wife
Shuld ſhew ther pariſh prieſt ther life
Onis a yere, as ſaith the boke,
Er any wight his houſil toke,
Then have I privilegis large
That maie of mochil thing diſcharge,
For he may ſay right thus parde:
Sir Prieſt, in ſhrift I tel it the,
That he to whom that I am ſhriven
Hath me aſſoilid, and me yeven
Penaunce ſothly for alle my ſin
Whiche that I founde me giltie in;
Ne I ne' have nevir entencion
To make double confeſſion,
Ne reherce eſte my ſhrift to the;
O ſhrifte is right enough to me;
This ought the to ſuffiſin wele,
Ne be not rebell nere a dele,
For certis though thou haddeſt it ſworne,
I wote no prieſt ne prelate borne
That maie to ſhrift eft me conſtraine,
And if thei done I wol me plaine,
For I wote where to plainin wele:
Thou ſhalt not ſtreinin me a dele,
Ne enforce me ne not me trouble
To makin my confeſſion double:
Ne I have none affection
To' have double abſolucion;
The firſt is right inough to me;
This lettre' aſſoiling quite I the:
I am unbounde; what maiſt thounde
More of my ſinnes me to unbinde,
For he that might hath in his honde
Of all my ſinnis me unbounde?
And if thou wolt me thus conſtraine,
That me mote nedis on the plaine,
There ſhall no juge imperiall,
Ne biſhop ne officiall,
Done judgement on me, for I
Shal gone and plaine me opinly

Anon to my ſhriftfathir newe,
Whiche that highte Frere Wolfe untrewe,
And he ſhal chuſin him for me,
For I trowe he can hampir the;
But Lord! he would be wrothe withall
Yf men would him Frere Wolfe ycall,
For he would have no pacience,
But done all crulll vengience;
He would his might done at the leſt,
Than nothing ſpare for Godd'is heſt:
And God ſo wiſe be my ſocour
But thou yeve me my Saviour
At Eſtir, whan it likith me,
Withoutin preſing more on the,
I wol forth and to him ygone,
And he ſhal houſil me anone,
For I am out of thy grutching;
I kepe not dele with the nothing.
Thus may he ſhrive him that forſaketh
His pariſh prieſt and to me taketh,
And if the prieſt wol him refuſe
I am full redy him to' aecuſe,
And him puniſh and hampir ſo
That he his churche ſhal forgo.
But who ſo hath in his ſeling
The conſequence of ſuche ſhriving
Shal ſene that prieſt male nere have might
To know the conſcience aright
Of him that is undir his cure;
And this is ayenſt holy' ſcripture,
That biddith every herde honeſt
Have very knowing of his beſt;
But povir folke, that gon by ſtrete,
That have no golde ne ſummis grete,
Them would I let to ther prelates
Or let ther prieſtis know ther ſtates,
For to me right nought yevin thei,
And why it is, for thei ne may.
Thei ben ſo bare I take no kepe,
But I woll havin the fat ſhepe;
Let pariſh prieſtis have the lene;
I yeve not of ther harme a bene:
And if that prelatis gretche it,
That oughtin wroth be in ther wit
To leſin ther fat beſtis ſo,
I ſhal yeve 'hem a ſtroke or two,
So that thei ſhal leſin with force
Ye, both ther mitre and ther croce.
Thus jape I' hem, and have do longe,
My privilegis ben ſo ſtrong.
Falſe Semblant would have ſtintid here,
But Love ne made him no ſuche chere,
That he was wery of his ſawe,
But for to make him glad and fawe
He ſaid, Tell on more ſpecially
How that thou ſerviſt untruly:
Tel forth, and ſhame the nere a dele,
For as thine habit ſhewith wele,
Thou ſerveſt an holy heremite.
Sothe is but I' am but an ipocrite.
Thou goeſt and prechiſt poverte.
Ye, Sir, but Richeſſe hath poſte,
Thou prechiſt abſtinence alſo.
Sir, I woll fillen, ſo mote I go,
My paunche of gode mete and gode wine,
As ſhould a maiſtir of divine,
For how that I me povir faine
Yet al povir folke I diſdaine.

I love bettir the acqueintaunce
Ten timis of the King of Fraunce
Than of a pore man of milde mode
Though that his ſoule be all ſo gode,
For whan I ſe beggirs quaking,
Nakid on mixins all ſtinking,
For hungre crie and eke for care,
I entrement not of ther fare;
Thei ben ſo pore and ful of pine,
Thei might not ones yeve me a dine,
For thei have nothing but ther life;
What ſhould he yeve that liketh his laife?
It is but ſoly to' entremete
To ſeke in hounde'is neſt fat mete:
Let bere him to the ſpittle' anone,
But for me comfort get thei none:
But a full riche ficke uſurere
Would I viſitin and drawe nere;
Him would I comforte and relete,
For I hope of his golde to gete;
And if that wickid Deth him have,
I woll go with him in his grave:
And if there any reprove me
Why that I let the povir be,
Woſt thou how I know how to' aſcape?
I ſay and ſwerin him full rape
That riche men han more tetchis
Of ſinne than han theſe pore wretchis,
And han of counſaile more miſtere,
And therfore I would drawe 'hem nere;
But as gret hurt, it maie ſo be,
Hath ſoule in right grete poverte,
As ſoule in grete richeſſe forſothe,
Al be it that thei hurtin bothe,
For richeſſe and mendicitee
Bene clepid two extremitees,
The mene is clepid Suffiſaunce,
There lieth of vertue the' aboundaunce,
For Salomon, ful wel I wote,
In his wiſe Parablis us wrote,
As it is knowen of many' a wight,
In his thirtieth chapitil right,
God thou me kepe for thy poſte
Fro richeſſe and mendicite,
For if a riche man him dreſſe
To thinkin to moche on richeſſe
His hert on that ſo ferre is ſette
That he' his Creatour doth foryette,
And him that beggith woll aie greve;
How ſhould I by his worde him leve
Unneth that he n'is a micher
Forſworne, or els Godd'is lier?
Thus ſayith Salomon'is ſawes.
Ne we find writtin in no lawes,
And namely in our Chriſtin laie,
Who ſo ſaith ye I dare ſay naie,
That Chriſt ne his apoſtils dere
While that thei walkid in erth here,

Were nevir ſene herbrid begging,
For they n'olde beggin for nothing.
And right thus were men wont to teche.
And in this wiſe wouldin it preche
The maiſtirs of divinite
Somtime in Paris the cite.

And if men would there gaine appoſe
The nakid texte and let the gloſe,
It mightin ſone aſſoilid be,
For men may wel the ſothe yſe,
That pardie thei might aſke a thing
Plainly forth withoutin begging,
For they weren Godd'is herdis dere,
And cure of ſoulis haddin here,
Thei ne wolde nothing begge ther fode,
For aftir Chriſt was done on rode
With ther propir hondis thei wrought,
And with traveile, and ellis nought,
Thei wonnin al their ſuſtinaunce,
And lividin forth in ther penaunce,
And the remenaunt yaf awaie
To othir pore folkis alwaie.
Thei neithir bildin toure ne hall,
But thei in houſis ſmal with alle.
A mighty man, that can and maie,
Should with his honde and body' alwaie,
Winne him his fode in labouring,
Yf he ne' have rent or ſuche a thing:
Although he be religious,
And God to ſervin curious,
Thus mote he done or do treſpas,
But if it be in certaine caas,
That I can telle if miſtir be
Right wel whan that the time I ſe.
Seke the boke of Saincte Auguſtine,
Be it in papir or perchemene,
There as he writte of theſe worchinges,
Thou ſhalt ſene that none excuſinges
A perfite man ne ſhould yſeke
By wordis ne by dedis eke,
Although he be religious
And God to ſervin curious,
That he ne ſhal ſo mote I go,
With propir hondes and body' alſo
Yget his fode in laboring,
Yf he ne' have properte of thing,
Yet ſhould he ſel all his ſubſtaunce,
And with his ſwinke have ſuſtinaunce,
If he be parfite in bounte;
Thus han the bokis toldè me:
For he that wol gone idilly,
And uſith it aie beſily
To hauntin othir menn'is table,
He is a trechour full of fable,
Ne he ne maie by gode reſon
Excuſe him by his oriſon,
For men behovith in ſome giſe
Ben ſomtime out of God's ſerviſe,
To gon and purchaſin ther nede.
Men mote etin, that is no drede,
And ſlepe, and eke do othir thing,
And ſo long may thei leve praying.

So may they eke ther praiere blinne
While that thei werke ther mete to winne;
Seint Auſtin wol thertо accorde
In thilkè boke that I recorde.
Juſtinian eke, that made lawes,
Hath thus forbodin by olde ſawes.
No man, up paine for to be ded,
Mighty' of body, to begge his bred
Yf he may ſwinke it for to gete;
Men ſhould him rathir maime or bete,
Or done of him aperte juſtice,
Than ſuffrin him in ſuche malice.
Thei done not wel, ſo mote I go,
Whiche that takin ſuche almeſſe ſo,
But if thei have ſome privilege
That of the paine 'hem woll alege.
But how that is can I not ſe
But if the prince diſcevid be;
Ne I ne wene not ſikirly
That thei maie have it rightfully.
But yet I wol not determine
Of princis powir ne define,
Ne by my worde compre'hende iwis,
Yf it ſo ferre may ſtretche in this;
I wol nat entremete a dele
But I trowe that the boke ſaith wele,
Who that taketh almeſſis that be
Dewe to folke that men may yſe
Lame and feble, wery and bare,
Povir, or in ſuche manir care,
That con winnin 'hem nevir mo,
For thei havin no power therto,
He etith his owne dampning,
But if he lie that made al thing;
And if ye ſuche a truaunt finde,
Chaſtiſe him wel if ye be kinde;
But thei would hatin you parcaas
If that ye fillin in ther laas.
Thei would eſtſonis do you ſcathe,
If that thei mightin, late or rathe,
For thei be not ful pacient
That han the worlde thus foule yblent;
And wetith wel that God ybad
The gode man ſell al that he had
And folowe' him, and to pore it yeve:
He would not therfore that he live
To ſervin him in mendience,
For it was nevir his ſentence,
But he bad werke whan that nede is,
And folowe him in gode dedis.
Saint Poule, that loved al holy church,
He bade th' apoſtils for to wurch,
And winne ther livelode in that wiſe,
And 'hem defendid truandiſe,
And ſayid, Werkith with your honden;
Thus ſhould the thing be underſtonden.
He n'olde iwis have bid 'hem begging,
Ne ſellin goſpell ne preching,
Leſt thei berafte with ther aſking
Folke of ther cattle or of ther thing.
For in this world is many' a man
That yeveth his gode, for he ne can
Werne it for ſhame, or ellis he
Would of the' adkir delivered be,

And for he him encombrith ſo
He yeveth him gode to let him go:
But it can him nothing profite;
Thei leſe the yefte and the merite.
The gode folke that St. Poule to preched
Profrid him ofte, whan he 'hem teched,
Some of ther gode in charite,
But therof right nothing toke he,
But of his hondis would he gette
Clothis to wrine him, and his mete.

Tel me than how a man may liven
That al his gode to pore hath yeven,
And wol but onely bidde his bedes,
And ner with hondes labour his nedes.
May he do ſo? Ye, Sir. And howe?
Sir, I woll gladly tellin you.
Saint Auſtin ſaith, A man may be
In houſis that han properte,
As Templers and Hoſpitèlers,
And as theſe Chanons Regulers,
Or theſe White Monkis, or theſe Blake,
I wol no mo enſamplis make,
And take thereof his ſuſteining,
For therin lyith no begging,
But othirwayis not iwis,
Yet Auſtin gabbith not of this;
And yet ful many' a monke laboureth
That God in holy churche honoureth,
For whan ther ſwinking is agon
Thei rede and ſing in church anone.
And for there hath ben grete diſcorde
As many' a wight may bere recorde,
Upon the' eſtate of mendicience,
I wol ſhortely in your preſence
Tel how a man maie begge at nede,
That hath not wherwith him to fede,
Maugre his felowis janglinges,
For ſothfaſtnes wol none hidinges,
And yet percaſe I may obey,
That I to you ſothly thus ſey.

Lo, here the caſe eſpeciall:
If a man be ſo beſtiall
That he of no craſte hath ſcience,
And nought deſirith ignorence,
Than may he go a begging yerne
Till he ſome othir craſte can lerne,
Through whiche withoutin truanding
He may in trouthe have his living;
Or if he may done no labour
For elde, or ſickeneſſe, or langour,
Or for his tendir age alſo,
Than may he yet a begging go:
Or if he have peravinture
Through uſage of his noriture
Livid ovir delitiouſly,
Than oughtin gode folke cominly
Han of his miſchefe ſome pite,
And ſuffrin him alſo that he
May gon about and begge his bred
That he be not for hongir ded:
Or if he have of craſte conning,
And ſtrength alſo and deſiring
For to worchin, as he had what,
But he finde neithir this ne that,
Than may he beggin til that he
Have gettin his neceſſite:
Or if his winning be ſo lite
That his labour will not quite
Sufficiauntly al his living,
Yet may he go his brede begging,
Fro dore to dore he may go trace
Till he the remnaunt may purchaſe:
Or if a man would undirtake
Any empriſe for to ymake
In the reſcous of our lay,
And it defendin as he may,
Be it with armis or lettrure,
Or othir convenable cure,
If it be ſo that he pore be,
Than may he beggin til that he
Maie findin in trouth for to ſwinke,
And get him clothis, mete, and drinke,
Swinke he with his hondes corporel,
And not with hondes eſpirituel.

In all this caſe, and in ſemblables,
If that there ben mo reſonables,
He maie begge as I tell you here,
And ellis not in no manere,
As William Saint Amour would preche,
And oftin would diſpute and teche
Of this matir al opinly
At Paris fully' and ſolemply;
And all ſo God my ſoule bleſſe
As he had in this ſtedfaſtneſſe
The' acorde of the' Univerſite,
And of the peple', as ſemith me.
No gode man ought it to refuſe,
Ne ought him thereof to excuſe,
Be wrothe or blithe, who ſo thou be,
For I wol ſpeke and tell it the
All ſhould I die and be put doun,
As was Saint Poule, in derke priſoun,
Or be exilid in this caas
With wrong, as Maiſtir William was,
That my mothir Hypocriſie
Baniſhed for her gret envie.
My mothir flemed him Saint Amour:
This noble man did ſuche labour
To ſuſteine er the loialte,
That he to muche agilte me;
He made a boke and let it write,
Wherin his life he did all dite,
And would that eche refied begging,
And livin by my traveiling,
If I ne' had rent ne othir gode;
What! wenith he that I were wode?
For labour might me nevir pleſe,
I have more will to ben at eſe,
And have well levir, ſothe to ſaie,
Before the peple pattre' and praie,
And wrie me in my foxerie
Undir a cope of papelardie

(Quod Love) What divel is this I here?
What wordis tellist thou me here?
What, Sir, Why Falseneſſe that apert is.
Than dredist thou not God? No, certis;
For selde in grete thing shal he spede
In this world that God wol ydrede,
For folke that 'hem to vertue yeven,
And truily on ther owne liven,
And 'hem in godeneſſe aie contente,
On 'hem is litil thrifte isente:
Suche folke ydrinkin grete miseſe;
That life ne may me nevir pleſe.
But se what golde han uſerers,
And silvir eke, in ther garners!
Tailagiers, and theſe moniours,
Bailiffes, bedils, provoſtes, contours,
Theſe livin well nigh by ravine;
The smale peple 'hem mote encline,
And thei as wolvis wol 'hem eten;
Upon the povir folke thei geten
Ful muche of that thei spende or kepe;
N'is none of 'hem that thei n'il strepe,
And wrine 'hem selvin well at full;
Withoutin scalding thei 'hem pull:
The strong the feble ovirgothe,
But I that were my simple clothe
Robbe bothe the robbid and robbours,
And gile the gilid and gilours;
By my treget I gathre' and threſte
The grete treſour into my cheſte,
That lieth with me so faste ybounde;
Thus myn high paleis do I founde,
And by my debtis I fulfill
With wine at feſtis at my will,
And tablis full of extremees:
I wol no life but eſe and pees,
And winnin golde to spende also,
For whan the grete bagge is ago
It comith full right with my japes,
Make I not wel tomble mine apes?
To winnen is alwaie mine entent;
My purchace' is bettir than my rent;
For though that I should betin be
Ovir al I entremet me:
Withoutin me maie no wight dure;
I walkin soulis for to cure:
Of all the world the cure have I
In brede and eke in length; boldly
I wol bothe preche and eke counsailen:
With hondis wol I not travailen,
For of the Pope I have the bull;
I ne holde not my wittis dull:
I wol not stintin in my live
Theſe emperouris for to shrive,
Or kingis, dukes, and lordis grete,
But povir folke al quite I lete:
I love no suche shriving parde
But it for othir cause be:
I recke not of theſe povir men;
Ther estate is not worthe an hen.
Wher findeſt thou' a swinkir of labour
Have me to be his confeſſoure?
But empreſſis and ducheſſis,
Theſe quenis and eke countesſis,
Theſe abbeſſis and eke bigins,
And theſe grete ladies palasins,
Theſe joly knightis and bailives,
Theſe nonnis and theſe burgeis wives,
That riche yben and eke pleſing,
And theſe maidinis welfaring,
Where so thei clad or nakid be,
Uncounsailed goeth there none fro me;
And for ther soulis savite
At lorde and lady', and ther meine,
I aske, whan thei 'hem to me shrive,
The propertie of al ther live,
And make 'hem trowe, both moste and leſt,
Ther pariſh prieſt is but a beſt
Ayens me and my company,
That shrewis ben as gret as I,
Pro whiche I wol not hide in holde
No privite that me is tolde,
That I by worde or signe iwis
Ne wol make 'hem know what it is,
And thei wollen also tellin me
Thei hele fro me no privite;
And for to make you them perceiven
That usin folke thus to deceiven,
I wol you saine withoutin drede
What men maie in the Goſpell rede
Of Saint Mathewe the goſpellere,
That saieth as I shall you saie here.

Upon the chairè of Moſes
Thus it is gloſid doutileſs,
(That is, The Oldè Teſtament,
For thereby is the chairè ment)
Sittin Scribis and Phariſen,
That is to saine, the curſid men,
Whiche that we Ipocritis call;
Doeth that thei preche I rede you all;
But doeth not as thei doen a dele
That ben not werie to saie wele,
But thei doe well no will have thei,
And thei would binde on folke alwaie,
That ben to be begilid able,
Burdons that ben importable;
On folkis shouldirs thinges thei couchen,
That thei n'ill with ther fingirs touchen;
And why woll thei not touch it? why!
For them ne liſte nat sikirly,
For the sadde burdons that men taken
Ymakin folkis shouldirs aken.
And if thei doe ought that gode be
That is for folke it shouldin se;
Ther burdons largir makin thei,
And makin ther hemmes wide alwaie,
And lovin setis at the table
The firſt and the moſte honourable;
And for to han the firſt chairis
In sinagogges to 'hem full dere is,
And willen that folke 'hem loute and grete
Whan that thei passin through the strete,
And wollen be cleped Maistir also;
But thei ne should not willin so,
The Goſpell' is there ayenst I geſſe,
That shewith well ther wickidneſſe

An othir cuſtome uſin we;
Of 'hem that woll ayenſt us be
We hate him dedly everychone,
And wo woll werrey him as ene;
Him that one hatith hate we all,
And conjecte how to doen him fall;
And if we ſene him winne honour,
Richeſſe or preiſe, through his valour,
Provende or rent, or dignite,
Full faſte iwis compaſſin we
By what laddre' he is clombin ſo;
And for to make him doune to go
With traiſon we woll him defame,
And doen him leſin his gode name.
Thus from his laddir we him take,
And thus his frendis foes we make,
But worde ne wetin ſhall he none
Till al his frendis ben his fone;
For if we did it opinly
We mightin have blame redily,
For had he wiſte of our malice
He had him kept but he were nice.
An othir' is this, that if ſo fall
That there be one emong us all
That doeth a gode tourne, out of drede
We faine it is our aldir dede,
Ye, ſikirly though he it fained,
Or that him liſte or that him dained
A man through him avauncid be,
Thereof all partineres be we,
And tellin folke where ſo we go
That man through us is ſprongin ſo.
And for to have of men praiſing
We purchace through our flattering
Of richè men of grete poſte
Lettirs to witneſſe our bounte,
So that man weneth that maie us ſe
That allè vertue in us be.
And alwaie povir we us fain,
But how ſo that we begge or plain
We ben the folke without leſing,
That all thing have without having.
Thus be dradde of the peple' iwis,
And gladly my purpoſe is this:
I delin with no wight but he
Have golde and treſour grete plente;
Ther acquaintaunce well lovin I:
This moche is my deſire ſhortly;
I entremete me of brocages,
I makin pece and mariages,
I am gladly executeur,
And many times a procuratour,
I am ſometime a meſſagere,
That fallith not to my miſtere.
And many timis I make enqueſt,
For me that office is nat honeſt;
To dele with othir mennis thing
That is to me a grete liking;
And if that ye have ought to doe
In place that I repairin to,
I ſhall it ſpedin through my witte
As ſone as ye have told me it:
So that ye ſervin me to paie
My ſervice ſhal be yours alwaie.

But who ſo wol chaſtiſe me
Anone my love yloſte hath he,
For I love no man in no giſe
That woll me reprove or chaſtiſe,
But I woll all folke undirtake,
And of no wight no teching take;
For I that othir folke chaſtie
Woll not be taught fro my folie.

I ne love none hermitage more;
Al deſertis and holtis hore.
And grete wodis everichone
I let 'hem to the Baptiſt John;
I queth him quite, and him releſſe,
Of Egypt all the wildirneſſe:
To ferre were all my manſions
Fro allè citees and gode touns.
My paleis and mine houſe make I
There men maie renne in opinly
And ſaie that I the worlde forſake;
But all amidde I builde and make
My houſe, and ſwimme and plaie therein
Bette than a fiſhe doth with his finne.

Of Antichriſt'is men am I
Of whiche that Chriſt ſaieth opinly
Thei have habite of holineſſe,
And livin ſoche wickidneſſe.
Al' outward lambin ſemin we,
Full of godeneſſe and of pite,
And inwarde we withoutin fable
Ben gredy wolvis raviſable.
We enviroun bothe londe and ſe;
With all the worlde werryin we:
We woll ordain of allè thing,
Of folkis gode and ther living.
If there be caſtill or cite
Within that any bougerons be,
Although that thei of Millaine were,
For therof ben thei blamid there;
Or if a wight out of meſure
Would lene ther gold and take uſure,
For that he is ſo covetous,
Or if he be to lechirous,
Or theſe that hauntin ſimonie,
Or provoſt full of trechirie,
Or prelate living jolilie,
Or prieſt that halt his quein him by,
Or oldè whoris hoſtilers,
Or othir baudes or bordillers,
Or ellis blamed of any vice,
Of whiche men ſhouldin doen juſtice;
By all the ſainctis that we preie,
But thei defende them with lampreie,
With luce, with elis, with ſamons,
With tendir gees and with capons,
With tartis or with cheſſis fat,
With deinte flaunis brode and flat,
With caleweis or with pullaile,
With coninges or with fine vitaile,
That we undir our clothis wide
Ymakin through our golet glide,

Or but he woll doe come in haste
Rae venison ybake in paste,
Whethir so that he loure or groine
He shall have of a corde a loigne,
With whiche men shall him binde and lede
To brenne him for his sinfull dede,
That men shull here him crie and rore
A mil'is waie about and more,
Or els he shall in prison die
But if he woll his frendship buie,
Or smertin that that he hath doe
More than his gilt amountith to.
But and he couthe thorough his sleight
Doe makin up a toure of height,
Nought rought I wher of stone or tree,
Or yerth or turvis, though it be,
Though it were of no vounde stone
Ywrought with square and scantilone,
So that the toure were stuffid well
With allè richis temporell;
And than that he would him up dresse
Enginis bothè more and lesse,
To caste at us by every side,
To berin his gode namè wide.
Soche sleightis I shullin you yeven,
Barelles of wine by sixe or seven,
Or golde in sackis grete plente,
He should though sone delivered be;
And if he have no suche pitences
Let him studie' in equipolences,
And lerin lies and fallaces,
If that he would deserve our graces,
Or we shall bere him soche witnesse
Of sinne and of his wretchidnesse,
And doen his lose so widè renne,
That all quicke we shouldin him brenne,
Or ellis yeve hem soche penaunce
That is well worse than the pitaunce.
For thou shalt nevir for nothing
Con knowen aright by ther clothing
The traitours full of trechèrie
But thou ther werkis can espie.
And ne had the godè keping be
Whilom of the' Universite,
That kepeth the kei of Christendome,
We' had ben tourmentid all and some.
Soche ben the stinking Prophetis;
N'is none of 'hem that gode prophete is,
For thei through wickid entencion,
The yere of the' incarnacion
A thousande and two hundrid yere
Five-and-fifte, ferther ne nere,
Broughtin a boke with sorie grace,
To yeven ensample in common place,
That sayid thus, though it were fable,
This the Gospell pardurable
That fro the Holie Ghost is sent:
Well were it worthy to be ybrent.
Entitlid was in soche manere
This boke of whiche I tell here,
There n'as no wight in al Paris
Beforne our Ladie at parvis
That thei ne might the bokè by;
The sentence plesed 'hem well truely.
To' the copie if him talent toke
Of the Evangelist'is boke,
There might he se by grete traisoun
Full many' a false comparisoun.
As moche as thorough his grete might,
Be it of hete be it of light;
The sunne ysurmountith the mone,
That troublir is, and chaungith sone,
And the nutte kerneill dothe the shell,
I skorne nat that I you it tell,
Right so withoutin any gile
Surmountith this noble' Evangile
The worde of any' evangelist,
And to ther title thei toke Christ.
And many soche comparisoun,
Of whiche I make no mencioun,
Mightin men in that bokè finde,
Who so coud of 'hem havin minde.
The' Uni'versite, that was a slepe,
Gan for to braied, and takin kepe,
And at the noise the [illegible] up cast,
Ne nevir sithen slept [illegible]
But up it stert, and a[illegible]ke
Ayenst this false horr[illegible]oke,
All redy battaile for to make,
And to the judge the boke thei take.
But thei that broughtin the boke there
Hent it anone awaie for fere;
Thei n'old shewe it no more a dele,
But than it kept, and kepin wele,
Till soche a time that thei maie se
That thei so strong ywoxin be
That no wight maie 'hem well withstonde,
For by that boke thei durst not stonde:
Awaie thei gonne it for to bere,
For thei ne durstin not answere
By exposicion ne glose
To that that clerkis woll oppose
Ayenst the cursidnesse iwis
That in that boke ywrittin is.
Now wotte I nat ne can nat se
What manir ende that there shall be
Of all this whiche that thei yhide,
But yet algate thei shall abide
Till that thei maie it bette defende;
This trowe I best woll be ther ende.
This Antichrist abidin we.
For we ben all of his meine,
And what man that woll not be so
Right sone he shall his life forgo:
We woll a peple' on him areise,
And through our gile doin him ceise,
And him on sherpè speris rive,
Or othir waies bring him fro live,
But if that he woll folowe' iwis
That in our boke ywrittin is.

Thus moche woll our boke signifie,
That while Peter had maistrie
Maie nevir John shewe well his might.
Now have I you declarid right
The mening of the barke and rinde
That makith the entencions blinde;

But now at erſt I woll begin
To expoune you the pithe within,
And the ſeculers comprehende
That Chriſt'is lawe wollin defende,
And ſhould it kepen and maintenen
Ayeniſt them that all ſuſtenen,
And falſly to the peple techen
That John betokeneth 'hem to prechen
That there n'is lawe covenable
But thilke Goſpell pardurable
That fro the Holy Ghoſt was ſent
To tournin folke that ben miſwent.
The ſtrength of John thei undirſtonde
The grace in whiche 'hei ſaie thei ſtonde,
That doeth the ſinfull folke convert,
And 'hem to Jeſu Chriſt revert:
Full many' an othre' horriblete
Mowin men in that boke ſe,
That ben commaundid doutileſs
Ayenſt the lawe of Rome expreſſe,
And all with Antichriſt thei holden,
As men maie in the [illegible]eholden.
And than comma[illegible]thei to fleen
All tho that with Pe[illegible]en;
But thei ſhall nevir have that might,
And God to ſ[illegible]me, for ſtrief to fight,
That thei ne ſhall ynough yfinde
That Peter's lawe ſhall have in minde,
And evir holde and ſo maintene,
That at the laſt it ſhall be ſene
That thei ſhall all comin therto
For aught that thei can ſpeke or do.
And thilke lawe ne ſhall not ſtonde
That thei by John have undirſtonde,
But maugre them it ſhall adoun,
And ben brought to confuſion.
But I woll ſtint of this matere,
For it is wondir long to here;
But had that ilke boke endured
Of bettre' eſtate I were enſured,
And frendis have I yet parde
That han me ſet in grete degre,

Of all this worlde is emperour
Gile my fathir, the falſe trechour,
And empereſſe my mothir is,
Maugre the Holie Ghoſte iwis.
Our mightie linage and our rout
Reigneth in every reigne about,
And well' is worthy we mini'ſters be,
For all this worlde governe we,
And can the folke ſo well deceve
That none our gilis can perceive,
And though thei doen thei dare not ſaie;
The ſothe dare no wight bewraie.
But he in Chriſt'is wrathe him ledeth
That more than Chriſt my brethrin dredeth;
He n'is no full gode champion
That dredeth ſoche ſimilacion,
Nor that for pain woll refuſin
Us to correcte and accuſin
He woll not entremete by right,
Bi havin God in his eyen ſight,
And therefore God ſhall him punice!
But me ne rekith of no vice
Sithen men us loven communablie,
And holdin us for ſo worthie,
That we maie folke repreve echone,
And we n'ill have repreſe of none:
Whom ſhouldin folke worſhipin ſo
But us that ſtintin nevir mo
To patrin while that folke maie' us ſe
Though it not ſo behinde 'hem be?

And where is there more wode folie
Than to enhauncin chivalrie,
And lovin noble men and gaie,
That jolie clothis weren alwaie?
If thei be ſoche folke as thei ſemen,
So clene as men ther clothis demen,
And that ther wordes ſolowe ther dede,
It is grete pite out of drede
For thei woll be none hypocritis;
Of 'hem me thinkith gretè ſpite is:
I can not love 'hem on no ſide:
But beggirs with theſe hodis wide,
With fleigh and palè facis lene,
And with graie clothis nat full clene,
But frettid full of tatar wagges,
And high ſhewis knoppid with dagges,
That frouncin like a qualè pipe,
Or botis riveling as a gipe;
To ſoche folke, as I you deviſe,
Should princis and theſe lordis wiſe
Take all ther landis and ther thinges,
Bothe warre and pece in govirninges,
To ſoche folke ſhould a prince him yeve
That would his life in honour live.
And if thei be nat as the ſeme,
That ſervin thus the worlde to queme,
There would I dwèllin to deceive
The folke, for thei ſhall nat perceve.
But I ne ſpeke in no ſoche wiſe
That men ſhould humble' habite diſpiſe;
So that no pride there undir be
No man ſhould hate, as thinkith me,
The povir man in ſoche clothing;
But God ne preſith him nothing
That ſaieth he hath the worlde forſake,
And hath to worldly glory 'him take,
And woll of ſoche delicis uſe;
Who maie that beggir well excuſe?
That papelarde that him yeldith ſo,
And woll to worldly eſe ygo,
And ſaieth that he the worlde hath loſt,
And gredily it gripith eft,
He is the hounde, ſhame is to ſain,
That to his caſting goeth again.

But unto you dare I not lie,
But might I ſelin or eſpie
That ye perceived it nothing
Ye ſhouldin have a ſtarke leſing:
Right in your honde thus to beginne,
I ne wolde it let for no ſinne.

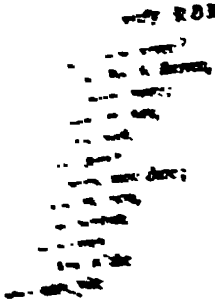
The god lough at the wondir tho,
And every wight gan laugh alſo,
And ſayid, Lo, here a man right
For to be truſtie to' every wight!

Falſe Semblant, (quod Love) ſaie to me,
Sith I thus have avauncid the,
That in my court is thy dwelling,
And of Ribaudes ſhalt be my king,
Wolt thou well holdin my forwardes?
Ye, Sir, quod he, from hens forwardes
Had ner your fathir here beforne
Servaunt ſo true ſithe be was borne.
That is ayeniſt all nature.
Sir, put you in that avinture,
For though ye borowes take of me
The ſikerer ſhall ye nevir be
For hoſtagis ne ſikirneſſe
Or chartris for to bere witneſſe:
I take your ſelf to recorde here
That men ne maie in no manere
Terin the wolfe out of his hide
Till he be ſlain bothe backe and ſide,
Though men him bete and all defile:
What! wene ye that I woll begile?
For I am clothid mekily,
There undre' is all my trechiry;
Mine herte chaungith nevir the mo
For none habite in which I go:
Though I have chere of ſimpleneſſe,
I am not werie of ſhreudneſſe:
My lemman, ſtrainid Abſtenaunce,
Hath miſtir of my purveiaunce,
She had full long ago be dedde
N'ere for my counſaile and my redde:
Let her alone, and you and me.
And Love anſwerid, I truſt the
Without borowe, for I woll nonе.
And Falſe Semblant the theſe anone
Right in that ikè ſamè place,
That had of treſon all his face
Right blacke within and white without,
Thanking him gan on his knees lout.
Than was ther nought but every man
Now to affaute that ſailin can,
(Quod Love) and that full hardily:
Than armid thei hem cominly
Of ſoche armour as to 'hem fell.
Whan thei were armid fiers and fell,
Thei went 'hem forthe all in a rout
And ſet the caſtill all about;
Thei will not awaie for no drede
Till it ſo be that thei ben dede,
Or till thei have the caſtill take.
And four battellis gan thei make,
And partid 'hem in foure anone,
And toke there waie, and forthe thei gone
The foure gatis for to aſſaile,
Of whiche the kepirs woll not faile,
For thei ben neithir ſicke ne dede,
But hardie folke, and ſtrong in dede.
Now woll I faine the countenance
Of Falſe Semblant and Abſtinaunce,
That ben to Wickid Tong ywent;
But firſt thei helde ther parliment
Whethir it to be doin were
To makin 'hem be knowin there
Or ellis walkin forthe diſgiſed;
But at the laſtè thei deviſed
That thei would gone in tapinage,
As it were in a pilgrimage,
Like gode and holie folke unfeined;
And anon Dame Abſtinence ſtreined
Toke on a robe of cameline
And gan he gratche as a bigine.
A largè coverchief of threde
She wrappid all about her hede;
But ſhe forgate not her pſaltere.
A paire of bedis eke ſhe bere
Upon a lace all of white threde,
On whiche that ſhe her bedis bedè;
But ſhe ne bought 'hem nevre' a dele,
For thei were given her, I wote wele,
God wote of a full holie frere,
That ſaied he was her fathir dere,
To whom ſhe had oftiner went
Than any frere of his covent;
And he viſitid her alſo,
And many' a ſermone ſaied her to;
He n'olde let for no man on live
That he ne would her oftin ſhrive,
And with ſo grete devocion
Thei madin her confeſſion
That thei had oftin for the nones
Two heddis in one hode at ones.
Of faire ſhape I deviſed her the,
But pale of face ſometime was ſhe;
That falſè traitoureſſe untrewe
Was like that falowe horſe of hewe
That in the' Apocalypis is ſhewed,
That ſignifieth tho folke beſhrewed
That ben all full of trecherie,
And pale thorough hypocriſie;
For on that horſe no colour is
But onely dedde and pale iwis:
Of ſoche a colour enlangoured
Was Abſtinence iwis coloured;
Of her eſtate ſhe her repented
Right as her viſage repreſented.
She had a burdoune all of theft
That Gile had yeve her of his yeſt,
And à ſkrippè of faint diſtreſſe,
That full was of elengèneſſe,
And forthe ſhe walkid ſobirlie.
And Falſe Semblant ſaint, *Je vous die*,
And as it were for ſoche miſtere
Doin on the cope of a frere,
With chere ſimple and full pitous
His loking was not diſdeinous
Ne proude, but meke and ful peſible.
About his necke he bare a Bible,
And ſquyirly forthe gan he gon,
And for to reſt his limmes upon
He had of treſon a potent;
As he were feble' his waie he went.
But in his ſleve he gan to thring
A raſour ſharpe and well biting,

That was yforgid in a forge
Whiche that men clepin Coupé Gorge.
So long forth ther-waie thei nomin
Till thei to Wickid Tong comin,
That at his gate ywas sitting,
And sawe folke in the waie passing.
The pilgrimis sawe he fast by
That berin 'hem full mekily,
And humbly thei with him ymette;
Dame Abstinence first him ygrette,
And sithe him False Semblant salved,
And he 'hem, but he not remeved,
For he ne drede him not a dele,
For whan he sawe ther facis wele
Alwaie in hertè him thought so
He should knowin 'hem bothe two,
For well he knewe Dame Abstinaunce,
But he knewe not Constreinaunce;
He knewe nat that she was constrained,
Ne of her chev'is life yfained,
But wende she come of will all fre,
But she come in othir degree,
And if of gode will she began
That will ywas failid her than.

And False Semblant had he faine alse,
But he knewe nat that he was false;
Yet false was he, but his falsneste
Ne coud he nat espie nor gesse,
For Semblant was so slie ywrought
That falseneste he ne espied nought;
But haddest thou knowin him beforne
Thou woldist on a boke have sworne,
Whan thou him sawe in thilke araie,
That he that whilom was so gaie,
And of the daunce Jolie Robin,
Was tho become a Jacobin:
But sothly what so men him call
Frere prechouris ben gode men all;
Ther odir wickidly thei beren
Soche minstrellis if that thei weren.
So ben Augustins and Cordileres,
And Carmis, and eke sackid freres,
And all the freris shode and bare,
Though some of 'hem ben grete and square,
Full holy men as I 'hem deme;
Everiche of hem would gode man seme;
But shalt thou nevir of apparence
Sein conclude gode consequence
In any argument irvis,
If exiftens all failid is;
For men maie finde alwaie sopheme
The consequence to enveneme,
Who so hath had the subtilte
The double sentence for to se.
Whan the pilgrimis comin were
To Wickid Tong that dwellid there,
Ther harnies nigh 'hem was algate;
By Wickid Tong adoune thei sate,
That badde 'hem nere him for to come,
And of tidingis tell him some,
And saied 'hem, What case makith you
To comin into this place now?
Sir, sayid Strainid Abstinaunce,
We for to dryin our penaunce
With hertis pitous and devout
Are commen as pilgrimes gon about;
Well nigh on fote alwaie we go;
Full doughtie ben our helis two,
And thus bothe we ben ysent
Throughout the worlde that is mifwent
To yeve ensample' and preche also;
To fithin sinfull men we go,
For othir fishing ne fishe we:
And, leve Sir, for that charite,
As we be wont, erbo'rowe we crave;
Your life to amenne Christ it save,
And so it should you not displese
We wouldin, if it were your ese,
A short fermon unto you sain.
And Wickid Tong answered again,
The house (quod he) seche as ye se
Shall nat be warnid you for me:
Saie what you list and I woll here.
Graunt mercie! tho swetè Sir dere,
Quod aldirfirst Dame Abstinence,
And thus began she her sentence:
Sir, the first vertue for certaine,
The gretist and most soverraine
That maie be founde in any man
For having or for wit he can
That is his tong for to refrain;
Therto ought every wight him pain,
For it is bettir still to be
Than for to spekin harme parde,
And he that harkeneth it gladly
He is no gode man sikirly.
And, Sir, abovin all othir sinne
In that art thou most giltie inne;
Thou spake a jape not long a go,
And, Sir, that was right evill doe.
Of a yong man that here repaired,
And nevir yet this place apaired,
Thou saidest he awaitid nothing
But to disceve Faire Welcoming:
Ye saidin nothing sothe of that,
But, Sir, ye lie, I tell you plat:
He cometh no more ne goeth parde;
I trowe ye shal him nevir se;
Faire Welcoming in prison is
That ofte hath plaied with you er this
The fairist gamis that he coude
Withoutin filth, or stil or loude;
Now dare he not himselfe solace;
Ye han also the man do chace,
That he dare neither come ne go:
What nevith you to hate him so
But propirly your wickid thought,
That many a false lesing hath thought,
That nevith your foule eloquence,
That janglith evre' in audience,
And on the folke arisith blame,
And doeth 'hem dishonour and shame
For thing that maie have no preving
But likelineste and contriving?
For I dare saine that Reson demeth
It is not al soth thing that semeth;

And it is ſinne for to controve
Any thing that is to reprove;
This wote ye wele, and Sir, therefore
Ye arne to blame mochil the more;
And nathèleſſe he reckith lite
He yeveth not now thereof a mité,
For if he thoughtin harme, parfaie
He would ycome and gone all daie;
He ne coude not himſelf abſtene;
Now cometh he not, and that is ſene,
For he ne taketh of it no cure,
But if it be through avinture,
And laſſe than othir folke algate,
And though here watchiſt at the gate
With ſpere in thine areſt alwaie,
There muſe muſarde all the longe daie;
Thou wakiſt night and daie for thought;
Iwis thy traveile is for nought,
And Jelouſie withoutin faile
Shall nevir quite the thy traveile;
And ſcathe is that Faire Welcoming,
Withoutin any treſpaſſing,
Shal wrongfully in priſon be,
There wepith and languiſhjth he;
And though thou nevir yet iwis
Agiltiſt man no more but this
Take not a grefe, it were worthy
To put the out of this baily,
And altirwarde in priſon lie,
And fettrid the till that thou die;
For thou ſhalt for this ſinnè dwelle
Right in the devil's arſe of helle
But if that thou repentè the.
Maiſaie thou lieſt falſely (quod he.)
What, welcome with miſchaunce now!
Have I therefore herberid you
To ſaie me ſhame and eke reprove,
With ſorie happe to your behove?
And I to day your herbegere?
Go herbir you els where than here
That han a lier callid me.
Two tregetours arte thou and he,
That in mine hous do me this ſhame,
And for my ſothefawe ye me blame.
Is this the ſermon that ye me make?
To all the divils I me take,
Or ellis God thou me confounde,
But er men diddin this caſtill founde
It paſſith not ten daies or twelve
But it was tolde right to my ſelve,
And as thei ſaide right ſo tolde I;
He kiſte the Roſe privily;
Thus ſaide I now, and have ſaid yore
I n'ot where he did any more:
Why ſhould men ſaie me ſuche a thing
If that it had yben gabbing?
Right ſo ſaide I, and woll ſaie yet,
I trowe I lyid not of it;
And with my bemis I woll blowe
To allè neighbours arowe
How he hath bothe comin and gone.
Tho ſpake Falſe Semblant right anone,
All is nat goſpell out of doute
That men ſaine in the toune aboute;
Lay no deſe ere to my ſpeking,
I ſwere you, Sir, it is gabbing
I trow ye wote well certainly
That no man lovith him tendirly
That ſaith him harme, if he wote it,
All be he ner ſo pore of wit;
And ſothe is alſo ſikirly,
This know ye, Sir, as well as I,
That lovirs gladly wol viſiten
The placis there ther loavs habiten:
This man you loveth and eke honoureth,
This man to ſervin you laboureth,
And clepith you his frende ſo dere,
And this man makith you gode chere,
And every where that he you meteth
He you ſaleweth and he you greteth;
He preſith not ſo ofte that ye
Oughte of his coming encombrid be;
There preſin othir folke on you
Ful oftir than he doith now;
And if his hert him ſtrainid ſo
Unto the Roſe for to go,
Ye ſhould him ſene ſo oftin nede
That ye ſhould take him with the dede;
He coude his comming not forbere,
Though ye him thrillid with a ſpere;
It n'ere not than as it is now;
But truſtith well, I ſwere it you,
That it is clene out of his thought.
Sir, certis he ne thinkith it nought,
No more ne doth Faire Welcoming,
That ſore abyith al this thing.
And if thei were of one aſſent,
Full ſone ywere the Roſe ybent,
Tho the malgre your's would ybe.
And, Sir, of o thing herkeneth me;
Sithe ye this man that loveth you
Han ſaide ſuch harme and ſhamè now,
Wittith well if he geſſid it
Ye maie well demin in your wit
He ne wolde nothing love you ſo,
Ne callin you his frende alſo,
But night and daie he wollin wake
The caſtill to diſtroie and take,
Yf it were ſothe as ye deviſe;
Or ſome man in ſome manir wiſe
Might it warnin him every dele,
Or by himſelfe percevin wele,
For ſithe he might not come and gone,
As he was whilom wonte to done,
He might it ſonè wite and ſe,
But now all othirwiſe wote he.
Than have we, Sir, all uttirly
Deſervid hell, and jolily
The deth of hellè doutileſſe,
That thrallin folke ſo giltileſſe.
Falſe Semblant ſo provith this thing
That he ne can none anſwering,
And ſeeth alwaie ſoche apparaunce
That nigh he fel in repentaunce,
And ſaid him; Sir, it maie well be;
Semblant, a gode man ſemin ye,
And Abſtinence, ful wiſe ye ſeme;
Of o talent you bothe I deme:



Than hath thy prieſt parochiall,
Though he thy frende be ſpeciall.
I have avantage in o wiſe,
That your prelates ben not ſo wiſe
Ne halfe ſo lettrid as am I;
I am licenſid boldily
In divinite for to rede,
And to confeſſion out of drede
Yf that ye wol you now confeſſe,
And leve your ſinnis more and leſſe,
Without abode knele doune anon
And you ſhal have abſolucion.

TROILUS & CRESEIDE*.

IN FIVE BOKES.

BOKE I.

The double ſorow of Troilus to telle,
That was the King Priamus ſonne of Troy,
In loving how his aventuris felle
From wo to wele, and aftir out of joy,
My purpoſe is er that I partè froly,
Thou Theſiphone! thou helpe me t'endite
This woful verſe, that wepin as I write.

To the I clepe, thou goddeſſe of tourment,
Thou cruil wight, ſorowing ay in paine!
Help me, that am the wofull inſtrument
That helpith lovirs as I can complaine;
For wel ſit it, the ſothè ſor to ſaine,
A woful wight to have a drery fere,
And to a ſorowfull tale a ſory chere.

For I, that god of Lov'is ſervauntes ſerve,
Ne dare to love for mine unlikelineſſe,
Prayin for ſpede, al ſhould I therfore ſterve,
So ferre am I fro his helpe in derkeneſſe;
But natheleſſe if this may done gladneſſe
To any lovir, and his cauſe aveile,
Have he the thanke and mine be the traveile.

But ye lovirs that bathin in gladneſſe,
Yf any drope of pite in you be,
Remembrith you of paſſid hevineſſe
That ye have felte, and on the' adverſite
Of othir folke, and thinkith how that ye
Han felte that Lovè durſt you to diſpleſe
Or ye han won him with to gret an eſe.

And prayith for 'hem that ben in the cace
Of Troilus, as ye may aftir here
That Love 'hem bring in hevin to ſolace;
And eke for me prayith to God ſo dere,
That I have might to ſhew in ſome manere
Suche paine and wo as Lov'is folke endure
In Troilus unſely avinture.

And biddith eke for them that ben diſpeire
In love, that nevir will recovered be,
And eke for them that falſely ben apeired
Through wickid tongis, be it he or ſhe,
And biddith God for his benignite
So graunt 'hem ſone out of this world to pace
That ben diſpairid out of Lov'is grace.

And biddith eke for them that ben at eſe
That God 'hem graunt in love perſeveraunce,
And ſende 'hem grace ther lovis for to pleſe,
That it to love be worſhip and pleſaunce;
For ſo hope I my ſelfe beſt to avaunce
To pray for them that Lov'is ſervauntes be,
And write ther wo, and live in charite;

* In this boke is ſhewed the fervent love of Troilus to Creſeide, whom he enjoyed for a time, and her grete untruthe to him againe in giving her ſelf to Diomedes, who in the end did ſo caſt her off that the came to grete miſery. In whiche diſcourſe Chaucer liberally treteth of the divine purveiance. *Urry.*

And for to have of them compassioun,
As though I were ther ownè brothir dere.
Now herkenith with a gode entencioun,
For now wol I go streight to my matere,
In whiche ye may the double sorowes here
Of Troilus in loving of Creseide,
And how she forsoke him er that she deide.

It is wel wist how that the Grekis strong
In armis with a thousand shippis went
To Troiè wardis, and the cite long
Besiegedin, nigh ten yeres ere thei stent,
And how in divers wise and one entent,
Tha ravishing to wreke of Queine Heleine,
By Paris don, thei wroughtin all their peinè.

Now fell it so that in the toune there was
Dwelling a lord of gret authorite,
A gret divine, that clepid was Calcas,
That in that science so' experte was that he
Knew wel that Troiè should destroyid be,
By answere of his god, that hight was thus
Dan Phebus, or Apollo Delphicus.

So whan this Calcas knew by calculing,
And eke by the' answere of this god Apollo,
That Grekis shouldin suche a peple bring
Thorow the whiche that Troy must be fordo,
He caste anone out of the toune to go,
For wel he wist by sorte that Troiè sholde
Distroyid be, ye, would who so or n'olde;

Wherfore for to departin softily
Toke purpose ful this wight, forknowing, wise,
And to the Grekis host ful privily
He stale anone, and thei in curteis wise
Didin to him both worship and service,
In trust that he hath conning 'hem to rede
In every peril which that was to drede.

Grete rumour rose whan it was first espied
In al the toune, and opinly was spoken
That Calcas traitour fled was, and alied
To them of Grece; and caste was to be wroken
On him that falsly hath his faith to broken,
And said that he and al his kinne atones
Were worthy to be brent both sell and bones.

Now had this Calcas lefte in this mischaunce,
Unknowing of this false and wicked dede,
A doughtir whiche that was in grete penaunce,
And of her life she was full sore in drede,
And ne wist nevir what best was to rede;
And as a widowe was she and alone,
And n'ist to whom she might ymake her mone.

Creseide ywas this ladies name aright;
As to my dome in al Troy's cite
Most fairist lady, passing every wight;
So angelike shone her natife beaute
That like a thing immortal semid she,
And therwith was she so parfite a creture
As she had be made in scorning of Nature.

This lady, whiche that al day herde at ere
Her fathir's shame, his falshed, and traisoun,
Ful nigh out of her wit for sorow' and fere,
In widowe's habit large of samite broun,
Before Hector on knees she fill adoun,
His mercy bad, her selfin excusing
With pitous voice, and tenditly weping.

Now was this Hector pitous of nature,
And saw that she was sorowful begone,
And that she was so faire a creture,
Of his godenesse he gladid her anone,
And saidè, Let your fathir's traison gone
Forth with mischaunce, and ye your self in joye
Dwellith with us whilis you list in Troye,

And al the honour men may do you have,
As ferforth as though your fathir dwelt here,
Ye shul have, and your body shul men save,
As fer as I may ought enquire and here.
And she him thankid with ful humble chere,
And oftir wolde and it had been his will,
And toke her leve, went home, and heldè her still.

And in her house she' abode with such meine
As til her honour nedè was for to holde;
And whilè she was dwelling in that cite
She kepte her estate, and of yong and olde
Ful wel beloved, and wel men of her tolde;
But whethir that she childrin had or none
I rede it nat, therfore I let it gone.

The thingis fellin as thei done of werre
Betwixin 'hem of Troie and Grekis ofte,
For some day boughtin thei of Troie it derre,
And eft the Grekis foundin nothing soft
The folk of Troie: and thus fortune aloft
And undir este gan 'hem to whelmin bothe,
Aftir her course, aie while that thei wer wrothe.

But how this toune came to distruccion
Ne fallith not to purpose me to tel;
For why? it were a long digression
Fro my matir, and you to long to dwel;
But the Troyan jestis, all as thei fel
In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dite,
Who so that can may rede 'hem as thei write.

But though the Grekis them of Troie in shetten
And ther citè besegid al aboute,
Ther olde usagis n'oldin thei not letten,
As to honouren ther goddis ful devoute,
But aldirmost in honour out of doute
Thei had a relicke hight Palladion,
That was ther trust abovin everichon.

And so befel, whan comin was the time
Of Aprilis, whan clothid is the mede
With newè grene, of lusty Ver the prime,
And with swete smelling flouris white and rede
In sondrie wise shewid, as I you rede,
The folke of Troie ther observances olde,
Palladion 'is fest, went for to holde.

Unto the temple in all ther best wise
In general went every manir wight
To herkin of Palladion's service,
And namily many a lusty knight,
And many' a lady fresh and maidin bright
Ful well beseyn the most meynè and lest
Both for the seson and for the hie fest.

Among these othir folke was Creseida,
In widdowe's habite blake; but nathèles
Right as our first lettir is now an A,
In beaute first so stode she makèles;
Her godely loking gladdid all the pres;
N'as nevir sene thing to be praised so derre
Nor undir cloudè biake so bright a sterre

As was Creſeide, thei ſaidin everichone
That her beheldin in her blakè wede;
And yet ſhe ſtode ful lowe and ſtil alone,
Behinde all othir folke, in litil brede,
And nie the dore, aye undir ſham'is drede,
Simple of atire, and debonaire of chere,
With full aſſurid loking and manere.

Dan Troilus, as he was wont to gide
His yongè knightis, ledde 'hem up and doune
In thilke large temple on everỳ ſide,
Beholding aie the ladies of the toune
Now here now there, for no devocioune
Had he to none to revin him his reſt,
But gan to praiſe and lackin whom he leſt.

And in his walk ful faſte he gan to waiten
If knight or ſquyir of his company
Gan for to ſike, or let his eyin baiten
On any woman that he could eſpie,
Then he would ſmile, and hold it a folie,
And ſay him thus; O Lord! ſhe ſlepith ſofte.
For love of the, whan thou tnrniſt ful ofte.

I have herde tel pardieux of your living,
Ye lovirs, and of your leude obſervaunce,
And whiche a labour folke have in winning
Of love, and in the keping whiche doutaunce,
And whan your pray is loſt wo and penaunce.
O very folis! blinde and nice be ye,
Ther is not one can ware by othir be.

And with that worde he gan caſt up his browe
Aſcaunce, lo! is this not wiſely iſpoken?
At whiche the god of Love gan lokin rowe
Right for diſpite, and ſhope him to be wroken;
He kidde anon his bowe was not to broken,
For ſodainly he hitte him at the full,
And yet as proude a pecocke can be pul.

O blindè worlde! o blinde entencioun!
How oftin fallith al th' effecte contraire
Of ſurquedrie and foule preſumpcion?
For caught is proude and caught is debonaire;
This Troilus is clombin on the ſtaire,
And litil wenith that he mote diſcende;
But al day failith thing that folis wende.

As proude Bayard beginnith for to ſkippe
Out of the way (ſo prickith him his corne)
Till he a laſhe have of the longè whippe,
Than thinkith he though I prannce all beforne
Firſt in the traiſe, full ſatte and newe iſhorne,
Yet am I but an horſe, and hors 'is lawe
I muſt endure, and with my feris drawe:

So fared it by this fiers and proudè knight;
Though he a worthy king'is ſonnè were,
And wenid that nothing had had ſuch might
Ayenſt his wil that ſhe. ld his herte ſtere,
Yet with a loke his hert ywoxe on fire,
That he that now was moſt in pride above
Woxe ſodainly moſte ſubject unto love.

Forthy enſample takith of this man
Ye wiſe, proude, and worthy folkis all,
To ſkornin Love, whiche that ſo ſore can
The fredome of your hertis to him thral;
For evir was and evir ſhall befal
That Love is he that al thingis may binde,
For no man maie fordo the law of kinde

That this be ſothe hath previd and doth yet,
For this (trowe I) ye knowin al and ſome,
Men redin nat that folke han gretir wit
Than thei that han ben moſt with love inome,
And ſtrengiſt folke ben therwith ovircome,
The worthyiſt and gretiſt of degre;
This was and is, and yet man ſhal it ſe.

And truiliche it ſitte well to be ſo,
For aldirwiſiſt han therwith ben pleſed,
And thei that han ben aldirmoſte in wo
With love han ben comfortid moſt and eſed,
And oft it hath the cruill herte apeſed,
And worthy folke made worthyir of name,
And cauſith moſt to dredin vice and ſhame.

Now ſith it may nat godely be withſtonde,
And is a thing ſo vertuous in kinde,
Ne grudgith nought to Love for to ben bonde,
Sithe as him ſelvin liſt he may you binde;
The yerde is bette that bowin wol and winde
Than that that breſt; and therfore I you rede
Folowith him that ſo well can you lede.

But for to tellin forth in ſpeciall
As of this king 'is ſonne of whiche I tolde,
And levin othir thing collaterall,
Of him thinke I my tale forth to holde,
Bothe of his joye and of his caris colde,
And all his werke as touching this matere,
For I it gan, I wol therto refere.

Within the temple went' him forth playing
This Troilus with every wight about,
On this lady and now on that loking,
Whereſo ſhe were of toune or of without;
And upon caſe befil that through a rout
His eye ypercid, and ſo depe it went
Til on Creſeide it ſmote, and there it ſtent,

And ſodainly for wondir wext aſtoned,
And gan her bet beholde in thrifty wiſe;
O mercy, God! thought he, where haſt thou wonned,
That arte ſo faire and godely to deviſe?
Therwith his hert began to ſprede and riſe,
And ſofte he ſighid, leſt men might him here,
And caught ayen his formir playing chere.

She n'as nat with the leſte of her ſtature,
But al her limmis ſo wel anſwering
Werin to womanhode, that creature
Was nevir laſſè manniſhe in ſeming,
And eke the purè wiſe of her mening
She ſhewid wel, that men might in her geſſe
Honour, eſtate, and womanly nobleſſe.

Tho Troilus right wondir wel withall
Gan for to like her menin and her chere,
Whiche ſomdele deignous was, for ſhe let fal
Her loke a lite a ſide, in ſuche manere
Aſcauncis, what may I nat ſtondin here?
And aftir that her loking gan ſhe light,
That never thought him ſene ſo gode a ſight

And of her loke in him there gan to quicken
So grete deſire and ſuche affectioun,
That in his hert 'is bottom gan to ſticken
Of her his fixe and depe impreſſioun;
And though he erſt had porid up and doun
Than was he glade his hornis in to ſhrinke;
Unnethis wiſt he how to loke or winke.

Lo! he that lete him selvin so conning,
And scornid 'hem that lov's painis drien,
Was ful unware that Love had his dwelling
Within the subtil stremis of her eyen,
That sodainly him thought that he felte dien
Right with her loke the spirite in his herte;
Blessid be Love, that thus can folke converte!

She thus in blake loking to Troilus
Ovir al thing he stode for to beholde,
But his desire, ne wherefore he stode thus,
He neithir chere made ne worde thereof tolde,
But from aserre, his manir for to holde,
On othir thing somtime his loke he cast,
And este on her, while that the service last.

And astir this, not sully all awhaped,
Out of the temple esiliche he wente,
Repenting him that evir he had japed
Of Lov'is folke, lest fully the discente
Of scorne fil on him self; but what he mente
Leste it were wiste on any manir side
His wo he gan dissimulin and hide.

Whan he was fro this temple thus departed
He streight anone unto his palais turneth;
Right with her loke thorough shottin and darted,
Al frainith he in luste that he sojourneth,
And all his chere and speche also' he abnormeth.
And aie of Lov'is servauntes every while,
Himselfe to wrie, at 'hem he gan to smile,

And sayd, Ah, Lord! so ye live all in lust,
Ye lovirs, for the conningist of you,
That servith most ententifeliche and best,
Him tite as oftin harme therof as prowe;
Your hire is quite ayen, ye, God wote howe,
Not wel for wele, but skorne for gode servise;
In faithe your ordir is ruled in gode wise.

In no certaine ben your observaunces,
But it in a few sely pointis be,
Ne nothing asketh so gret attendaunces
As doth your laie, and that knowin al ye;
But that is not the worst, as mote I the,
But tolde I which were the worst point, I leve,
Al saide I sothe, ye woldin at me greve.

But take this; that ye lovirs ofte eschewe,
Or ellis done of gode etencion,
Ful ofte thy lady wol it misseconstrewe,
And deme it harme in her opinion,
And yet if she for othir encheson
Be wroth, then shalt thou have a groin anone;
Lorde! wel is him that may bene of you one!

But for al this, whan that he seeth his time,
He held his pees, non othir bote him gained,
For Love began his fethirs so to lime,
That wel unneth unto his folke he fained
That othir besy nedis him distrained:
So wo was him that what to done he n'ist,
But bad his folke to gone where as 'hem list.

And whan that he in chambre was alone
He doune upon his bedd'is sete him sette,
And first he gan to sike and este to grone,
And thought aie on her so withoutin lette,
That as he satte and woke his spirite mette
That he her saugh and temple', and all the wise
Right of her loke, and gan it newe avise.

Thus gan he make a mirrour of his minde,
In whiche he saugh all wholly her figure,
And that he wel coude in his hert yfinde
It was to him a right gode avinture
To love suche one, and if he did his cure
To servin her yet might he sal in grace,
Or els for one of her servauntes pace:

Imagining that ne travaile nor grame
Ne might for so godely an one be lorne,
As she ne him for his desire no shame,
Al were it wiste, but in prise and upborne
Of alle lovirs, wel more than beforne.
Thus argumentid he in his ginning,
Ful unavisid of his wo comming.

Thus toke he purpose Lov'is crafte to sewe,
And thought that he would workin privily,
First for to hide all his desire in mewe,
From every wight iborne all uttirly,
But he might ought recovered ben therby,
Remembring him that *Love to wide iblowe*
Yelt bittir frute, although swete sede be sowe.

And pre al this ful mokil more he thought
What for to speke and what to holdin inne,
And what to artin her to love he sought,
And on a songe anone right to beginne,
And gan loude on his sorowe for to winne;
For with gode hope he gan fully assente
Creseida for to love, and nought repente.

And of his songe not onely his sentence,
(As write mine auctour, callid Lolius)
But plainely, save our tong'is difference,
I dare wel say in al that Troilus
Saied in his songe, lo! every word right thus
As I shal saine, and who so list it here
Lo! next this verse he may it findin here.

The songe of Troilus out of Petrarche.

If no love is, o God, what fele I so!
And if love is, what thing and whiche is he?
If love be gode from whence comith my wo?
If it be wicke a wondir thinkith me,
Whan every turment and adversite
That cometh of him may to me savery thinke,
For aye more thurst I the more that I drinke.

And if that at mine owne lust I breane,
From whence comith my wailing and my pleinte
If harme agre me wherto plaine I thenne?
I n'ot nere why unwery that I feinte.
O quicke deth! o swete harme so queinte!
How may I se in me soche quantite
But if that I consente that it so be?

And if that I consente I wrongfully
Complaine iwis. Thus poffid to and fro,
As stereles wight is in a bote, am I,
Amidde the se atwixin windis two
That in contrarie stondin evirmo.
Alas! what is this wondir maladie?
For hete of colde, for colde of hete, I die.

And to the god of Love thus sayid he
With pitous voice; O Lorde! now your'is is
My spirite, whiche that oughtin your'is be;
You thonke I, Lord, that han me brought to this;
But whethir goddesse or woman iwis
She be I n'ot whiche, that ye do me serve,
But as her man I wol aie live and sterve.

Ye ſtondin in her eyin mightily,
As in a place unto your vertue digne,
Wherfore o Lord! if my ſervice or I
May likin you, ſo bethe me to ben,
For mine eſtate royal here I reſigne
Into her honde, and with ful humble chere
Become her man, as to my lady dere.

Endeth the ſang.

In him ne deigned to ſparin blode royall
The fire of love, wherefro may God me bleſſe!
Ne him forbare in no degre for all
His virtue or his excellent proweſſe,
But helde him as his thrall lowe in diſtreſſe,
And brende him ſo in ſondrie wiſe aie newe,
That ſixty times a day he loſte his hewe.

So muchill daie fro daie his owne thought
For luſte to her gan quickin and encreſe,
That everiche othir charge he ſette at nought:
Forthy ful oftin, his hote fire to ceſe,
To ſene her godely loke he gan to preſe,
For therby to ben eſid wel he wende,
And aie the nere he was the more he brende;

For aie the nere the fire the hottir is,
This (trowe I) knowith al this company;
But were he ferre or nere I dare ſaie this,
By night or daie, for wiſedome or folie,
His hertè, whiche that is his breſt'is eye,
Was aie on her, that fairir was to ſene
Than evir was Helein or Polyxene.

Eke of the daie there paſſid nat an houre
But to himſelf a thouſande times he ſaide,
God godely, to whom I ſerve and laboure
As beſt I can, now would to God, Creſeide,
Ye wouldin on me rue er that I diede;
My dere herte, alas! mine hele, and my hewe,
And life, is loſte but ye woll on me rewe.

All othir dredis werin from him fledde
Bothe of th' aſſiege and his ſalvacion,
Ne' in his deſire non othir fancy bredde
But argumentes to this concluſion,
That ſhe on him would han compaſſion,
And he to ben her man while he maie dure;
Lo here his life, and from his deth his cure.

The ſharpè ſhouris fell of armis preve
That Hector or his othir brethrin didden
Ne made him onely therefore onis meve,
And yet was he, wher ſo men went or ridden,
Found one the beſt, and lengiſt time abiden
There peril was, and eke did ſuche travail
In armis that to thinke it was mervaile.

But for none hate he to the Grekis had,
Ne alſo for the reſcous of the toun,
Ne made him thus in armis for to mad,
But onely lo! for this concluſion,
To likin her the bet for his renoun:
Fro daie to daie in armis ſo he ſpedde
That all the Grekis as the deth him dredde.

And fro this forthe tho reſt him love his ſlepe,
And made his mete his foe, and eke his ſorow
Gan multiplie, that who ſo tokè kepe
It ſhewid in his hewe both even' and morow
Therfore a title he gan him to borowe
Of othir ſickeneſſe, leſt men of him wende
That the hottefire of cruill love him brende;

And ſaied he by a fevir fared amis:
But how it was certain I cannot ſay,
If that his ladie underſtode nat this,
Or fainid her ſhe n'iſt, one of the twele;
But well rede I that by no manir weie
Ne ſemid it as if ſhe on him rought,
Or of his paine, what ſo evir he thought.

But than yfelt this Troilus ſoche wo
That he was wel nigh wode; for aie his drede
Was this, that ſhe ſome wight had lovid ſo
That ner of him ſhe would han takin hede,
For whiche him thought he felt his hertè blede;
Ne of his wo ne durſt he nought begin
To tellin her for all this worlde to win.

But whan he had a ſpace left from his care,
Thus to himſelf full oft he gan to plain;
He ſaied, O ſole! now art thou in thè ſnare
That whilom japediſt at lov'is pain;
Now art thou hent, now gnaw thin owne chain:
Thou wert aie woned eche lovir reprehende
Of thing fro which thou canſt nat the defende.

What woll now every lovir ſaine of the
If this be wiſt? but er in thine abſence
Laughin in ſcorne, and ſain, Lo! there goth he;
That is the man of ſo grete ſapience,
That helde us lovirs leſte in reverence:
Now thanked be God he maie gon on the daunce
Of 'hem that Love liſte febly to avaunce:

But o thou woful Troilus! God would
(Sithe thou muſt lovin through thy deſtine)
That thou beſet wer of ſoche one that ſhould
Know all thy wo, all lackid her pite!
But all ſo colde in love towardis the
Thy ladie is as froſt in wintir mone,
And thou fordon as ſnowe in fire is ſone.

God would I were arivid in the port
Of deth, to which my ſorowe woll me lede!
Ah, Lorde! to me it were a grete comfort,
Than were I quite of languiſhing in drede,
For by my hidde ſorowe iblowe in brede
I ſhall bejapid ben a thouſande time
More than that ſole of whoſe foly men rime.

But now helpe God, and ye my ſwete, for whom
I plaine; icought ye nevir wight ſo faſt:
O mercie, my dere herte! and helpe me from
The deth, for I while that my life maie laſt
More than my life woll love you to my laſt;
And with ſome frendly loke gladith me, ſwete;
Though nevir nothing more ye me behete.

Theſe wordis and full many' an othir mo
He ſpake, and callid evir in his pleinte
Her name, to tellin unto her his wo,
Till nigh that he in ſalte teris was dreinte:
All was for nought; ſhe herd nat his compleinte;
And whan that he bethought on that folie
A thouſand folde his wo gan muliplie.

Bewailing in his chambir thus alone
A frende of his, that callid was Pandare,
Came onis in unware, and herd him grone,
And ſaw his frend in ſoche diſtreſſe and care;
Alas! (quod he) who cauſith all this fare?
O mercie God! what unhap maie this mene?
Han now thus ſone the Grekis made you lene?

Or haſt thou ſome remorse of conſcience?
And art now fall in ſome devocioun,
And wailiſt for thy ſinne and thine offence,
And haſt for ferde ycought contricioun?
God ſave 'hem that beſiegid han our toun,
That ſo can laie our jolite on preſſe,
And bring our luſtie folke to holineſſe!

Theſe wordis ſaied he for the nonis all,
That with ſuche thing he might him angry maken,
And with his angre doen his ſorowe fall
As for a time, and his corage awaken;
But well wiſt he, as ferre as tongis ſpeken,
There n'as a man of gretir hardineſſe
Than he, ne more deſirid worthineſſe.

What cas (quod Troilus) or what avinture
Hath gidid the to ſene me languiſhing,
That am refuſe of every creture?
But for the love of God, at my praying,
Go hence awaie, for certis my dying
Woll the diſeſe, and I mote nedis deie,
Therfore go waie; there n'is no more to ſeie.

But if thou wene I be thus ſicke for drede,
It is nat ſo, and therefore ſcorne me nought;
There is an othir thing I take of hede
Wel more than ought the Grekis han yet wrought,
Which cauſe is of my deth for ſorow and thought,
But though that I now tell it the ne leſte
Be thou nat wrothe; I hide it for the beſte.

This Pandare, that nigh malt for wo and routh
Ful oftin ſaied, Alas! what maie this be?
Now frende, (quod he) if evir love or trouth
Hath ben er this betwixin the and me
Ne do thou nevir ſoche a cruilte
To hidin fro thy frende ſo grete a care;
Woſt thou not well that it am I Pandare?

I woll partake with the of all thy paine;
If it ſo be I doe the no comfort,
As it is frend'is right, ſo the for to ſaine,
To enterpartin wo as glad diſport
I have and ſhall; for true or falſe report,
In wrong and right, iloved the all my live;
Hide not thy wo from me, but tell it blive.

Than gan this ſorowfull Troilus to ſike,
And ſaied him thus; God leve it be my beſt
To tellin the, for ſithe it maie the like
Yet woll I tell it the though my herte breſt,
And well wote I thou maieſt do me no reſt,
But leſt thou deme that I truſt nat to the:
Now herkin frende, for thus it ſtant with me.

Love, ayenſt the whiche who ſo defendith
Him ſelvis moſte him aldirleſt availeth,
With diſpeire ſo ſorely me offendith
That ſtreight unto the deth mine hert yfaileth,
Therto deſire ſo brennyngly me' affaileth
That to ben ſlain it were a gretir joie
To me than king of Grece to be and Troie.

Suffiſith this, my fully frende Pandare,
That I have ſaied, for now woteſt thou my wo,
And for the love of God my coldè care
So hide it well, I tolde it ner to mo,
For harmis mightin folowen mo than two
If it were wiſt; but be thou in gladneſſe,
And let me ſterve unknowe of my diſtreſſe.

How haſt thou thus unkindely and long
Hid this ſo me, thou folk? (quod Pandarus)
Paraventure thou maieſt for ſoche one long
That mine aviſe anone maie helpin us.
This were a wondir thing, (quod Troilus)
Thou couldiſt ner in love thy ſelfin wiſſe,
How devill maieſt thou bringin me to bliſſe?

Ye, Troilus, now herkin, (quod Pandare.)
Though I be nice, it happith oftin ſo,
That one that of axis doeth full ill fare
By gode counſaile can kepe his frend therfro;
I have my ſelf yſeine a blinde man go
There as he fell which that could lokin wide:
A ſole maie eke a wiſe man oftin gide.

A whetſtone is no kerving inſtrument,
But yet it makith ſharpe kerving tolis;
And if thou woſt that I have aught miſwent
Eſchue thou that, for ſoche thing to ſchole is,
Thus oftin wiſe men ben warin by folis:
If thou ſo do thy wit is well bewared;
By bis contrary' is every thing declared.

For how might evir ſwetneſſe have be know
To him that nevir taſtid bittirneſſe?
No man ne wot what gladneſſe is I trowe
That nevir was in ſorowe or ſome diſtreſſe;
Eke white by black, by ſhame eke worthines;
Eche ſet by othir more for othir ſemeth,
As men maie ſene, and ſo the wiſe it demeth.

Sithe thus of two contraries is o lore,
I that in love ſo oftin have aſſayed
Grevauncis ought to connin well the more
Counſailin the of that thou art diſmaied,
And eke the ne ought not ben ill apaied,
Though I deſiria with the for to bere
Thine hevie charge; it ſhall the laſſe the dere.

I wote well that it farid thus by me
As to my brothir Paris an heirdeſſe
Whiche that yclepid was Oenone
Wrote in a complaint of her hevineſſe;
Ye ſaw the lettir that ſhe wrote I geſſe.
Naie, nevir yet iwis (quod Troilus.)
Now (quod Pandare) herkinith, it was thus.

Phœbus, that firſt found art of medicine,
(Quod ſhe) and coud in every wight'is care
Remedy' and rede by herbis he knew fine,
Yet to himſelf his conning was full bare,
For love had him ſo boundin in a ſnare,
All for the doughter of the King Admete,
That all his craft ne coud his ſorowe bete.

Right ſo fare I; unhappily for me
I love one beſt, and that me ſmertith ſore,
And yet paravinture I can rede the
And nat my ſelf; repreve thou me no more,
I have no cauſe I wote well for to ſore
As doeth an hauke that liſtith for to plaie,
But to thine helpe yet ſomwhat can I ſaie.

And of o thing right ſikir maieſt thou be,
That certain for to dyin in the pain
That I ſhall nevir mo diſcovir the,
Ne by my trouth I kepe nat to reſtrain
The fro thy love, although it were Helein,
That is thy brothir's wife, if I it wiſt,
Be what ſhe be, and love her as the liſt.

Therefore as frendfulliche in me assure,
And tell me platte what is thine encheson
And finall cause of wo that ye endure,
For doubtith nothing mine entencion
N'as nat to you of reprehension
To speke as now, for no wight maie bireve
A man to love till that him list to leve.
And therefore wetith wel that both ben vicis,
Mistrustin all or ellis all beleve;
But well I wote the mene of it no vice is,
As for to trustin some wight is a preve
Of trouth, and forthy would I fain remeve
Thy wrong conceipt, and do the some wight trust
Thy wo to tell, and tell me if the lust.
The wise saieth, Wo is him that is alone,
For and he fall he hath none helpe to rise;
And sithe thou hast a felowe tell thy mone,
For this ne is nought certain the next wise
To winnin love, as techin us the wise,
To walle and wepe as Niobe the quene,
Whose teris yet in marble ben isene.
Let be thy weping and thy drerinesse,
And let us lessin wo with othir speche,
So maie thy wofull time semin the lesse;
Delitith nought in wo thy wo to seche,
As doen these folis that ther sorowes eche
With sorowe whan thei han misavinture,
And lustin nought to sechin othir cure.
Men saine, *To wretche is consolacion*
To have an othir felowe in his paine;
That ought well to ben our opinion,
For we bothe thou and I of love do plain;
So full of sorowe am I, sothe to saine,
That certainly as now no more hard grace
Maie sit on me; for why? there is no space.
Yf God wol thou art nought agast of me
Lest I would of thy lady the begile;
Thou wost thy self whom that I love parde,
As I best can, gon sithin longe while,
And sithe thou wost I do it for no wile,
And sithe I am he that thou trustith most,
Tel me somwhat, sens al my wo thou woste.
Yet Troilus for al this no worde saide,
But long he laie as still as he ded were,
And aftir this with siking he abraide,
And to Pandarus voice he lent his ere,
And up his eien cast he; and than in fere
Was Pandarus leste that in a frenseye
He should ysal, or ellis sone deye;
And said, Awake, full wonderliche and sharpe
What slombrist thou as in a lethargy?
Or art thou like an asse unto the harpe,
That herith soun, whan men the stringis ply,
But in his mind of that no melodie
Maie sinkin him to gladin, for that he
So dull is in his bestialite?
And with this Pandare of his wordis stent,
But Troilus to him no thing answerde;
For why? to tellin was nought his entent
Ner to no man for whom that he so ferde,
For it is said, *Men makin ofte a yerde*
With which the makir is himselfe ibetin
In sondrie manir, as these wise men treten.
And nameliche in his counsaile telling
That touchith love, that ought to ben secre,
For of himselfe it woll inough out spring,
But if that it the bet governid be;
Eke somtime it is crafte to seme to fle
Fro thing which in effecte men huntin faste:
Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste.
But nathelesse whan he had herde him crie
Awake, he gan to sike wondir sore,
And sayd, My frende, although that still I lie
I n'am not dese; now pece, and crie no more,
For I have herde thy wordis and thy lore,
But suffir me my fortune to bewailen,
For thy proverbis may nought me availen;
Nor othir cure ne canst thou none for me,
Eke I n'il not ben curid; I woll die:
What knowin I of the Quene Niobe?
Let be thine olde ensamplis, I the prey.
No, frende, (quod Pandarus) therfore I sey
Suche is delite of folis to bewepe
Ther wo, but to sekin bote thei ne kepe.
Now know I that there reson in the faileth;
But tellith me, if I wiste what she were
For whome that the al misavinture aileth
Durste thou trust that I tolde it in her ere
Thy wo, sith thou darst not thy selfe for fere,
And her besought on the to han some routhe?
Why nay, (quod he) by God and by my trouthe?
What! not as besily (quod Pandarus)
As though mine owne life lay in this nede?
Why no, parde, Sir, (quod this Troilus.)
And why? For that thou shouldist nevir spede.
Wost thou that well? Ye, that is out of drede,
(Quod Troilus) for all that er ye conne
She wol to no suche wretche as I be wonne.
(Quod Pandarus) Alas! what may this be
That thou dispairid art thus causilesse?
What! liveth nat thy lady? *Benedicite!*
How wost thou so that thou art gracilesse?
Suche evil is not alwaie botelesse;
Why put not thus impossible thy cure,
Sithe thing to come is ofte in avinture?
I grauntin well that thou endurist wo
As sharpe as doth he Tityus in hell,
Whose stomake foulis tirin evir mo
That hightin Vulturis, as bokis tell;
But I may not endurin that thou dwell
In so unskilful an opinion
That of thy wo n'is no curacion;
But onis n'ilt thou for thy cowarde herte,
And for thine ire and folish wilfulnesse,
For wantrust tellin of thy sorowe' smerte,
Ne to thine owne helpe do besinesse
As moche as speke a worde ye more or lesse,
But liest as he that of life nothing retche:
What woman living coude love suche a wretche?
What may she demin othir of thy dethe,
Yf thou thus die, and she n'ot why it is,
But that for fere is yoldin up thy brethe
For Grekis han besiegid us iwis?
Lord! which a thanke shalt thou have than of this
Thus wol she saine, and al the toune atones,
The wreteh is ded, the divel have his bones.

Thou maiſte alone her wepe, and crie, and knele,
And love a woman that ſhe wote it nought,
And ſhe wol quite it that thou ſhalt not fele,
Unknow unkiſt, and loſt that is unſought.
What! many a man hath love ful dere abought
Twenty wintir that his lady ne wiſte,
That never yet his ladie's mouthe he kiſte.

What! ſhould he therfore fallin in diſpaire,
Or be recreaunte for his owne tene,
Or ſlain himſelf, all be his ladie faire?
Naie, naie; but er in one be freſh and grene,
To ſerve and love ay his dere hert's quene,
And thinke it is a guerdone her to ſerve
A thouſande folde more than he can deſerve.

And of that worde toke hede Troilus,
And thought anone what folie he was in,
And how that ſothe him ſayid Pandarus,
That for to ſlaen himſelf might he not win,
But bothe to doen unmanhode and a ſinne,
And of his deth his ladie nought to wite,
For of his wo God wot ſhe knewe full lite.

And with that thought he gan ful ſore to ſike,
And ſaied, Alas! what is me beſt to doe?
To whom Pandare anſwerid, If the like
The beſt is that thou tell me all thy wo,
And have my trouth but if thou find it ſo
I be thy bote or that it ben full long
To pecis doe me drawe and ſithin hong.

Ye, ſo ſaieſt thou, (quod Troilus) alas!
But God wot it is naught, the rathir ſo
Full harde it were to helpin in this caas,
For well finde I that Fortune is my fo,
Ne all the men that ridin con or go
Maie of her cruill whele the harme withſtond,
For as her liſt ſhe plaieth with fre and bond.

(Quod Pandarus) Than blamiſt thou Fortune
For thou art wroth ye now at erſt I ſe;
Woſt thou not wel that Fortune is commune
To every manir wight in ſome degre?
And yet thou haſt this comfort, lo! parde,
That as her joyis motin ovirgone
So mote her ſorowes paſſin everichone.

For if her whele ſtint any thing to tourne
Than ceſſith ſhe Fortune anone to be;
Now ſith her whele by no waie maie ſojourn
What woſt thou of her mutabilite?
Right as thy ſelf luſt ſhe woll done by the,
Or that ſhe be nought ferre fro thine helping,
Paravinture thou haſt cauſe for to ſing.

And therfore woſt thou what I the beſeche?
Let be thy wo and tourning to the grounde,
For who ſo liſte have heling of his leche
To him bihovith firſt unwrie his wounde;
To Cerberus in hell aie be I bound,
Were it eke for my ſuſtir all thy ſorowe,
By my gode will ſhe ſhould be thine to morowe.

Loke up I ſaie, and tell me what ſhe is
Anone, that I maie gone about thy nede.
Know I her aught? for my love tell me this,
Than would I hope the rathir for to ſpede.
Tho gan the veine of Troilus to blede,
For he was hit, and woxe all redde for ſhame.
Aha! (quod Pandare) here beginnith game.

And with that worde he gan him for to ſhake,
And ſaied him thus; Theſe, thou ſhalt her name tell:
But tho gan ſely Troilus for to quake,
As though men ſhould han had him into hel,
And ſaied, Alas! of all my wo the well
Than is my ſwete foe callid Greſeide;
And well nigh with that word for fere he deide.

And whan that Pandare herd her name neven,
Lorde! he was glad, and ſayid, Frend ſo dere,
Now fare a right, for Jov'is name in heven
Love hath beſet the well: be of gode chere,
For of gode name, and wiſedom, and manere,
She hath inough, and eke of gentillneſſe:
If ſhe be faire thou woſt thy ſelf I geſſe.

Ne nevir ſeie I a more bounteous
Of her eſtate, ne gladdir, ne of ſpeche
A frendlier, ne none more gracious
For to doe well, ne laſſe had nede to ſeche
What for to doen, and all this bet to eche
In honour to as ferre as ſhe may ſtretche:
A king'is herte ſemith by her's a wretche.

And forthy loke of gode comforte thou be,
For certainly the firſte pointe is this,
Of noble corage, and wele ordaine the
A man to have pece with himſelfe iwis;
So oughtiſt thou, for nought but gode it is
To lovin wel and in a worthy place;
The ought not to clepin it happe but grace.

And alſo thinke, and therwith gladdin the,
That ſith thy lady vertuous is all,
So foloweth it that there is ſome pite
Amongis all theſe othir in generall,
And for thei ſe that thou in ſpeciall
Requiriſt nought that is ayen her name,
For Vertue ſtretchith not himſelfe to ſhame.

But wel is me that evir I was borne
That thou beſet art in ſo gode a place,
For by my trouth in love I durſt have ſworne
The ſhould nevir have tidde ſo faire a grace;
And woſt you why? for thou were wont to chace
At Love in ſcorne, and for diſpite him call
Saint Idiote, lord of theſe folis all.

How oftin haſt thou madin thy nice japes?
And ſaied that Lov'is ſervauntes everichone
Of nicete ben very godd'is apes,
And ſome of them would monche ther mete alone
Ligging a bedde, and make 'hem for to grone,
And ſome thou ſaidiſt had a blaunche fevere,
And praidiſt God thei ſhould nevir kevere:

And ſome of 'hem toke on 'hem for the cold
More than inough; ſo ſaidiſt thou full oft,
And ſome han fainid oftin time, and tolde
How that thei wakin whan thei ſlepin ſoft,
And thus thei would have ſet 'hem ſelf aloft,
And nathèleſſe were undir at the laſte:
Thus ſaidiſt thou, and japidiſt full faſte.

Yet ſaidiſt thou that for the more part
Theſe lovirs wouldin ſpeke in generall,
And thoughtin that it was a ſikir art
For failing for to' aſſayin ovir all:
Now maie I jape of the if that I ſhall;
But nathèleſſe although that I ſhould die
Thou art none of tho I dare well ſeie.

Now bete thy breſt, and ſaie to god of Love,
Thy grace, o Lord! for now I me repent
If I miſſpake, for now my ſelf I love;
Thus ſaie with all thine hert in gode entent.
(Quod Troilus) Ah, Lorde! I me conſent,
And praie to the my japis thou forgeve,
And I no more will jape while that I live.

Thou ſaieſt well, (quod Pandare) and now I hope
That thou the godd'is wrath haſt al apeſed;
And ſithin thou haſt weptin many' a drope,
And ſaid ſuch thing wherwith thy god is pleſed,
Now would God nevir but that thou were eſed,
And thinke well ſhe of whom reſt all thy wo,
Hereaftir maie thy comfort ben alſo.

For thilke ground that berith the wedis wicke
Bereth eke theſe wholſome herbis as full oft,
And nexte to the foule nettle rough and thicke
The roſe ywexith ſote, and ſmothe, and ſoft,
And next the valey is the hill aloft,
And next the derkè night is the glad morowe,
And alſo joie is next the ſine of ſorowe.

Now loke that well attempre be thy bridell,
And for the beſt aie ſuffre to the tide,
Or ellis all our labour is on idell:
He baſtith well that wiſely can abide.
Be diligent and true, and aie well hide:
Be luſtie, fre: perſever in ſerviſe,
And all is well if thou werke in this wiſe.

But he that partid is in every place
Is no where whole, as writin clerkis wiſe;
What wondir is if ſoche one have no grace?
Eke woſt thou how it fareth of ſome ſerviſe?
As plant a tre or herbe in ſondrie wiſe,
And on the morowe pull it up as blive,
No wondir is though it maie nevir thrive.

And ſith the god of Love hath the beſtowed
In place digne unto thy worthineſſe,
Stonde faſt, for to a gode port haſt thou rowed,
And of thy ſelf for any hevineſſe
Hope alwaie well; for but if drerineſſe
Or ovirhaſt doe our bothe labour ſhende
I hope of this to makin a gode ende.

And woſt thou why? I am the laſſe afered
Of this matter with my nece for to trete,
For this have I herd ſaie of wiſe and lered,
Was nevir man or woman yet beyete
That was unapt to ſuffre lov'is hete
Celeſtiall, or ellis love of kinde;
Forthy ſome grace I hope in her to finde.

And for to ſpeke of her in ſpeciall,
Her beaute to bethinkin and her youthe,
It ſit her nought to ben celeſtiall
As yet, though that her bothè liſt and kouthe;
And truily it ſit her well right nouthe
A worthie knight to lovin and cherice,
And but ſhe doe I holde it for a vice.

Wherfore I am and woll be aie redy
To painin me to do you this ſervice,
For bothe of you to pleſin; this hope I
Hereaftirwardis, for ye ben bothe wiſe,
And connin counſaile kepe in ſoche a wiſe
That no man ſhall the wiſir of it be;
And ſo we maie ben gladdid allè thre.

And by my trouth I have right now of the
A gode conceit in my wit as I geſſe.
And what it is I woll now that thou ſe;
I think that ſithin Love of his godeneſſe
Hath the convertid out of wickidneſſe
That thou ſhalt ben the beſtè poſt I leve
Of all his laie, and moſte his ſoin greve.

Enſample why, ſe now theſe gretè clerkes,
That errin aldirmoſte ayen all lawe,
And ben convertid from ther wickid werkes
Through grace of God, that leſt 'hem to him drawe,
Than arne thei folk that han moſt God in awe,
And ſtrengiſt faithid ben I undirſtonde,
And con an errour aldirbeſt withſtonde.

Whan Troilus had herde Pandare affeated
To ben his helpe in loving of Creſeide
He wext of wo, as who ſaith unturmented,
But hottir wext his love; and than he ſaide
With ſobre chere, as though his herte yplaide,
Now bliſfull Venus! helpe er that I ſterve,
Of the, Pandare, I now ſome thanke deſerve.

But, derè frende, how ſhal my wo be leſſe
Till this be done? and, gode now, tell me this,
How wolt thou ſaine of me and my diſtreſſe,
Leſt ſhe be wroth? this drede I moſt iwis,
Or wol not herin al how that it is:
Al this drede I, and eke for the manere
Of the her eme ſhe n'il no ſuche thing here.

(Quod Pandarus) Thou haſt a ful grete care
Leſt that the chorle may fal out of the mone.
Why, Lorde! I hate of the the nicè fare;
Why entremete of that thou haſt to done?
For Godd'is love I bidè the a bone;
So let me alone, and it ſhal be thy beſt.
Why, frende, (quod he) than done right as the leſt;

But herke, Pandare, o worde, for I ne wolde
That thou in me wendiſt ſo grete folie
That to my lady I deſirin ſholde
That touchith harme or any vilanie,
For dredileſſe me were levir to die
Than ſhe of me aught ellis underſtode,
But that might yfownin into gode.

Tho lough Pandare, and anon anſwerde,
And I thy borow'? fie! no wight doth but ſo;
I ne raught not although ſhe ſtode and herde
How that thou ſaieſt: but farewel, I wol go:
Adieu; be glad: God ſpede us bothè two!
Yeve me this labour and this buſineſſe
And of my ſpede be thine al the ſwetnes.

Tho Troilus on knees gan doune to fall,
(And Pandare in his armis hente him faſt)
And ſaide, Nowe fie upon the Grekis all!
Yet parde God ſhal helpin at the laſt,
And dredileſſe if that my life may laſt,
And God toforne, lo! ſome of 'hem ſhal ſmerte;
And yet me athinketh that this avaunt m'aſterte.

And now, Pandare, I can no morè ſay,
But thou wiſe, thou woſt thou maiſt: thou art al;
My life, my deth, hole in thine honde I lay,
Helpe me (quod he.) Yes, by my trouth I ſhal.
God yelde the, frende, and this in ſpecial,
(Quod Troilus that thou me recommaunde
To her that may me to the deth commaunde.

This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve
His ful frendè, tho saide in this manere;
Farwel, and thinke I wol thy thanke deserve,
Have here my trouth, and that thou shalt well here:
And went his way thinking on this matere,
And how he best might her besoche of grace,
And find a lesure therto and a place.

For every wight that hath a house to found
He rennith nat the werke for to beginne
With rakil hende, but he wol bide a stound,
And sende his hert'is line out fro within,
Thus aldirfirst his purpose for to winne,
As this Pandarus in his hert'is thought
Did cast his werke full wisely er he wrought.

But Troilus lay tho no lengir doun,
But up anon gat upon his stede baie,
And in the felde he playid the lioun;
Wo was that Grekе that with him met that daie:
And in the toune his manir tho forthe sie
So godely was, and gat him so in grace,
That eche him loved that lokid in his face.

For he becamin the most frendly wight,
The gentilist, and eke the mostè fre,
The trustyist, and one the bestè knight,
That in his time was or ellis might be:
Ded were his japis and his cruilte,
Ded his high porte and all his manir straunge,
And eche of them gan for a vertue chaunge.

Now let us stint of Troilus a stounde,
That ferith like a man that hurt is sore,
And is somdele of aking of his wounde
Yelsid wel, but helid no dele more,
And as an esy pacient the lore
Abite of him that goth about his cure,
And thus he drivith forth his avinture.

TROILUS & CRESEIDE.

PROŒMIUM LIBRI SECUNDI.

Out of theſe blackè wawis let us ſaile,
O winde, o winde! the wedir ginnith clere,
For in the ſe the bote hath ſuche travaile
Of my conning that unneth I it ſtere:
This ſe clepe I the tempeſtous matere
Of depe diſpaire that Troilus was in;
But now of hope the kalendis begin.
O lady mine, that callid art Clio!
Thou be my ſpede fro this forthe, and my Muſe,
To rimè wel this Boke til I have do;
Me nedith here none othir art to uſe;
For why? to every lovir I me' excuſe
That of no ſentiment I this endite,
But out of Latin in my tonge it write.
Wherfore I n'il have neithir thanke ne blame
Of all this Worke, but praie you mekily
Diſblamith me if any worde be lame,
For as mine auctour ſayid ſo ſay I;
Eke though I ſpeke of love unfelingly
No wondir is, for it nothinge of newe is:
A blinde man can not judgin wel in hewis.
I know eke that in forme of ſpeche is chaunge
Within a thouſande yere, and wordis tho
That haddin priſe now wondir nice and ſtraunge
Us thinkith 'hem, and yet thei ſpake 'hem ſo,
And ſpedde as wel in love as men now do;
Eke for to winnin love in ſondry ages
In ſondry londis ſondry ben uſages.
And forthy if it happe in any wiſe
That here be any lovir in this place
That herkeneth, as the ſtory wol deviſe,
How Troilus came to his ladie's grace,
And thinkith ſo n'olde I not love purchace,
Or wondrith on his ſpeche or his doyng,
I n'ot, but it is to me no wondring:
For every wight whiche that to Rome ywent
Halt nat o pathe ne alway o manere;
Eke in ſome londe were al the game yſhent
Yf that men farde in love as men don here,
As thus, in opin doyng or in chere,
In viſiting, in forme, or ſaid our ſawes;
For thus men ſaine, *Eche countre hath his lawes.*
Eke ſcarcely ben there in this placè thre
That have in love ſaid like and don in al,
For to this purpoſe this maie likin the,
And the right nought, yet al is done or ſhal;
Eke ſome men grave in tre, ſome in ſtone wal,
As it betide: but ſithe I have begonne,
Mine authour ſhall I ſolow as I konne.

LIBER SECUNDUS.

In May, that mothir is of monethis glade,
That the freſhe flouris all, blew, white, and rede,
Ben quicke ayen that wintir ded had made,
And full of baume is fleting every mede,
Whan that Phœbus doth his bright bennis ſpred
Right in the white Bole, right ſo it betidde,
As I ſhal ſinge, on May is day the thridde,
That Pandarus, for all his wiſe ſpeche,
Felte eke his parte of Lov'is ſhottis kene,
That coude hę ner ſo well of loving preche
It made his hewe al daie ful oftin grene;
So ſhope it that him fill that day a tene
In love for whiche in wo to bedde he went,
And made er it were day full many' a went.
The ſwalow Progne with a ſorowful lay,
Whan morow come, gan make her waimenting
Why ſhe forſhapin was; and ever lay
Pandare abed halfe in a ſlombering,
Til ſhe ſo nigh him made her waimenting,
How Tereus gan forth her ſuſtir take,
That with the noiſe of her he gan awake,
And to call, and dreſſin him up to riſe,
Remembring him his aranде was to done
From Troilus, and eke his grete empriſe,
And caſt, and knew in gode plite was the monе
To done voiage, and toke his way full ſone
Unto his nec'is paleis there beſide:
Now Janus, god of Entre, thou him gide!
Whan he was come unto his nec'is place,
Where is my lady, to her folke (quod he?)
And thei him tolde, and hę forthe in gan pace,
And founde two othir ladies ſit and ſhe
Within a pavid parlour, and thei thre
Herdin a maidin 'hem redin the geſte
Of the ſiege of Thebis whilis 'hem leſte.
Madame, quod Pandare, God you ſave and ſe,
With al your boke and al the companie!
Eighe! uncle mine, welcome iwis, (quod ſhe)
And up ſhe roſe, and by the honde in hie
She toke him faſt, and ſayid, This night thrye,
To gode mote it yturne, of you I mette;
And with that word ſhe doun on bench him ſet.
Ye, nece, ye ſhullin farin wel the bet,
If God wol, al this yere, (quod Pandarus)
But I am ſory that I have you let
To herkin of your boke ye praiſin thus:
For Godd'is love what ſaith it? tell it us:
Is it of love? ſome gode ye may me lere.
Uncle, (quod ſhe) your maiſtreſſe is nat here.
With that thei gonnin laugh, and tho ſhe ſaid
This romaunce is of Thebis that we rede,
And we have herd how that King Laius deide
Through Oedipus his ſonne, and all the deide;
And here we ſtintin at theſe letters rede
How the biſhop, as the boke can ytell,
Amphiorax, fill through the grounde to hell.
(Quod Pandarus) All this know I my ſelve,
And al th' aſſiege of Thebis and the care,
For herof ben there makid bokis twelve:
But let be this, and tell me how ye fare:
Do' way your barbe, and ſhew your face bare;
Do' way your boke: riſe up and let us daunce,
And let us done to May ſome obſervaunce.
Eighe! God forbid! (quod ſhe) What! be I mad?
Is that a widowe's life, ſo God you ſave?
Parde you makin me right ſore adrad;
Ye bene ſo wilde it ſemith as ye rave:
It ſat me wel bettir aſe in a cave
To bide, and rede on holy ſaintis lives:
Let maidins gon to daunce and yongę wives.
As evir thrive I (quod this Pandarus)
Yet coulde I tel a thing to don you play.
Now uncle dere (quod ſhe) tellith it us
For Godd'is love: is than th' aſſiege aweie?
I am of Grekis ferde ſo that I deie.
Nay, nay, (quod he) as evir mote I thrive
It is a thing wel bettir than ſuche five.
Ye, holy God! (quod ſhe) what thing is that
What! bettir than ſuche five? Eighe! nay iwis
For al this world ne can I redin what
It ſhould yben: ſome jape I trowe it is;
And but your ſelvin tell us what it is
My wit is for to' arede it al to lene:
As helpe me God I n'ot what that ye mene.
And I your borow; ne ner ſhal (quod he)
This thing be tolde to you, as mote I thrive.
And why ſo, uncle mine, why ſo? (quod ſhe.
By God (quod he) that wol I tel as blive,
For proudir woman is there none on live,

And ye it wiſte, in al the toune of Troie :
Ine jape nat, ſo evir have I joie.
Tho gan ſhe to wondrin more than before
A thouſande folde, and doune her eyin caſt,
For nevir ſithe the time that ſhe was bore
To knowin thing deſirid ſhe ſo faſt,
And with a ſike ſhe ſaid him at the laſt,
Now, uncle mine, I n'il you not diſpleſe,
Nor aſkin that that may do you diſeſe.
So aftir this with many wordis glade
And frendly talis, and with mery chere,
Of this and that thei ſpeke, and gonnon wade
In many an unkouth, glad, and depe, matere,
As frendis done whan thei ben met ifere,
Til ſhe gan aſkin him how Hector ferde,
That was the toun'is wall and Grekis yerde.
Ful wel, I thanke it God, ſaide Pandarus,
Save in his arme he hath a litle wounde;
And eke his freſhè brothir Troilus,
So the wiſe worthy Hector the ſecounde,
In whom that every vertue liſte habounde,
In allè trouthe and allè gentilneſſe,
Wiſedome, honour, fredome, and worthineſſe.
In gode faith, eme, (quod ſhe) that likith me
Thei farin wel; God ſave 'hem bothè two!
For trewliche I holde it a grete deinte
A king'is ſonne in armis wel to do,
And be of gode condicions therto,
For grete powir and moral vertue here
Sfelde iſene in one perſone ifere.
In gode faith that is ſothe, (quod Pandarus)
But by my trouth the king hath ſonnis twey,
That is to mene Hector and Troilus,
That certainly though that I ſhould ydey
Thei ben as voide of vicis, dare I ſey,
As any men that livin undir ſonne;
Her might is wide iknow and what thei conne.
Of Hector neſtith nothing for to tel;
Sull this world there n'is a bettir knight
Than he, that is of worthineſſe the wel,
And be wel more of vertue hath than might,
Sis knowith many' a wiſe and worthy knight:
And the ſame priſe of Troilus I ſey:
And helpe me ſo I knowe not ſuche twey.
Parde (quod ſhe) of Hector that is ſothe,
And of Troilus the ſame thing trowe I,
For dredileſſe men tellith that he dothe
Armis day by day ſo worthily,
And berith him here at home gently
To every wight, that al priſe hath he
Them that me were leviſt praiſid be.
We ſay right ſothe iwis, (quod Pandarus)
For yeſterday who ſo had with him ben
Sothin have wondrid upon Troilus,
For nevir yet ſo thicke a ſwarme of been
Sflewe as Grekis from him gannin fleen,
And through the felde in every wight'is ere
Ere was no crie but Troilus is there!
Now here now there he huntid 'hem ſo faſt
Ere n'as but Grekis blode and Troilus;
For him he hurt, and him al doun he caſt;
To where he went it was arrayid thus:
For was ther deth, and ſhelde and life for us,
That as that day ther durſt him none withſtonde
While that he helde his blody ſwerde in honde.
Therto he is the frendilyiſt man
Of gret eſtate that er I ſawe my live,
And where him liſte the beſt felowſhip can
To ſuche as him thinkith able to thrive.
And with that word tho Pandarus as blive
He toke his leve, and ſaid I wol gon hen.
Nay, blame have I, myne uncle, (quod ſhe) then,
What ellith you to be thus wery ſone,
And namiliche of women wol ye ſo?
Naie, ſittith doune; parde I have to done
With you to ſpeke of wiſdome er ye go;
And every wight that was about 'hem tho
That herdè that gan ferre awaie to ſtonde.
While thei two had al that 'hem liſte on honde.
Whan that her tale al brought was to an ende
Of her eſtate and of her governaunce,
(Quod Pandarus) Now time is that I wende,
But yet I ſay Ariſith, let us daunce
And caſte your widowe's habite to miſchaunce;
What liſte you thus your ſelfe to diſfigure,
Sithe you is tidde ſo glad an avinture?
But wel bethought; for love of God (quod ſhe)
Shal I nat wetin what ye mene of this?
No, this thing aſkith leſir tho quod he)
And eke it me would full muche greve iwis
If I it tolde and ye it toke amis:
Yet were it bette my tonge to holdin ſtil
Than ſay a ſothe that were ayenſt your wil.
For, neceſmyne, by the goddeſſe Minerve,
And Jupiter, that makith the thonde'ring,
And by the bliſsful Venus that I ſerve,
Ye ben the woman in this world living,
Withoutin paramours, to my weting,
That I beſt love, and lothiſt am to greve,
And that ye wetin wel your ſelfe I leve.
Iwis, mine uncle, (quod ſhe) graunt mercy!
Your frendſhip have I foundin evir yet;
I am to no man beholdin trewly
So muche as you, and have ſo litil quit;
And with the grace of God emforth my wit
As in my gilte I ſhal you ner offende
And if I have er this I wol amende,
But for the love of God I you beſeche,
As ye be he that I love moſt and triſte,
Let be to me your fremid manir ſpeche,
And ſaie to me your nece what ſo you liſt.
And with that worde her uncle' anon her kiſt,
And ſayid, Gladly, my leve nece ſo dere!
Take it for gode that I ſhal ſay you here.
With that ſhe gan her eyin doune to caſte,
And Pandarus to coughe began a lite,
And ſayid, Nece, alway, lo! to the laſte,
How ſo it be that ſome 'men hem delite
With ſubtil art ther talis for t' endite,
Yet for al that in ther entencion
Ther tale is all for ſome concluſion,
And ſithe the end is every tal'is ſtrength,
And this matir is ſo behovily,
What ſhould I paint or drawin it on length
To you that ben my frende ſo faithfully?
And with that worde he gan right inwardly

Beholdin her, and lokin in her face,
And saide, On suche a mirrour muche gode grace!
Than thought he thus, if I my tale endite
Ought harde or make a processe any while,
She shal no savour have therin but lite,
And trowe I would her in my wil begile,
For tendir wittis wenin al be wile
Wher as thei con nat plainliche undirstond;
Forthy her wit to sounin wol I fonde;
And lokid on hir in a besy wise,
And she was ware that he beheldе her so:
Ah, Lorde! (quod she) so faste ye me avise;
Sawe ye me ner er now? what, say ye no?
Yes, yes, (quod he) and bet wol er I go;
But by my trouth I thoughtin nowe if ye
Be fortunate, for now men shall it se.
For every wight some godely avinture
Somtime is shape, if he it can receive,
But if that he n'il take of it no cure
When that it cometh, but wilfully it weive,
Lo, neither case nor Fortune him deceive,
But right his ownè slouth and wretchidnesse;
And suche a wight is for to blame I gesse.
Gode avinture, o bellè nece! have ye
Full lightly foundin, and ye conne it take;
And for the love of God and eke of me
Catche it anone, lest avinture yslake:
What should I lengir processe of it make?
Yeve me your hond, for in this world is none,
If that you list, a wight so well begon.
And sithe I speke of gode entencioun,
As I to you have tolde wel here beforne,
And love as wel your honour and renoun
As any creture in the worlde iborne,
By al the othis that I have you sworne
And ye be wrothe therfore, or wene I lie,
Ne shal I never sene you efte with eie.
Beth nat agaste, ne quakith nat; wherto?
Ne chaungith nat for ferè so your hewe,
For hardily the worst of this is do;
And though my tale as now be to you newe,
Yet trust alwaie ye shal me findin trewe;
And were it thing that me thought unfitting
To you ne would I no such talis bring.
Nowe, my gode eme, for Godd'is love I pray
(Quod she) come of and tel me what it is,
For bothe I am agast what ye wol say,
And eke me longith it to wit iwis,
For whethir it be wel or be amis
Say on; let me not in this fere ydwel.
So wol I done: now herkenith I shal tel.
Now necè mine, the king'is owne dere sonne,
The gode, the wise, the worthy, fresh and fre,
Whiche alway for to done wel is his wonne,
The noble Troilus, so lovith the
That but ye helpe it wol his bane ybe.
Lo! here is al: what shouldin I more sey?
Doth what you list to make him live or dey.
But if ye let him dye I wol stervin,
Have here my trouthè, nece, I n'il not lien,
Al should I with this knife my throte kervin:
With that the teris burst out of his eyen,
And saide, If that ye done us both to dien
Thus giltilesse, than have ye fishid faire;
What mendeth it you though that we both apaire?
Alas! he whiche that is my lorde so dere
That trewe man, that noble gentle knight,
That naught desirith but your frendly chere,
I se him dyin, there he goth upright,
And hastith him with al his fullè might
For to ben slaine, if his fortune assente:
Alas that God you suche a beaute sente!
If it be so that ye so cruil be
That of his deth you listith nought to retch,
That is so trewe and worthy as we se,
No more than of a japir or a wretch,
If ye be suche, your beaute may nat stretch
To make amendes of so cruill a dede:
Avisèment is gode before the nede.
Wo worthe the faire gemme that is vertulesse!
Wo worthe that herbe also that dothe no bote!
Wo worth the beaute that is routhèlesse!
Wo worth that wight that trede eche undir fote!
And ye that ben of beaute croppe and rote,
If therwithal in you ne be no routhe,
Than is it harme ye livin, by my trouthe.
And also thinke wel that this is no gaude,
For me were lévir thou, and I, and he,
Were hongid than that I should ben his baude,
As high as men might on us al ise:
I am thine eme; the shame were unto me
As wel as the if that I should assent
Through mine abet that he thine honour shent.
Now undirstonde, for I you nought require
To binde you to him thorough no behest
Save one, that ye makin him bettir chere
Than ye han don er this and more feste,
So that his life be savid at the leste
This al and some is plainly our entente:
God helpe me so I nevir othir mente.
Lo! this request is nought but skil iwis,
Ne doute of reson parde is there none:
I set the worst that ye dredin; this is,
Men would wondir to sene him come and gone:
Ther ayenist answere I thus anone,
That every wight, but he be fole of kinde,
Wol deme it love of frendship in his minde.
What! who wol demin though he se a man
To temple gon that he th' imagis eteth?
Thinke eke howe wel and wisely that he can
Governe himselfe that he nothing foryeteth,
That wher he cometh he pris and thonk him
And eke therto he shal come hure so selde [geteth;
What force were it though all the toun beheldе?
Suche love of frendes reignith in al this toun:
And wrie you in that mantil evirmo;
And God so wis be my salvacioun
As I have saide your best is to do so.
But, gode nece, alway for to stint his wo
So let your daungir sugrid ben alite.
That of his deth ye be not al to wite.
Cresèidè, which that herde him in this wise,
Thought I shal fele what he menith iwis.
Now eme, (quod she) what wouldin ye devise?
What is youre rede that I should don of this?
That is wel said, quod he: certaine best is

That ye him love aien for his loving,
As love for love is skilful guerdoning.
Thinke eke how elde wastith every hour
In eche of you a part of your beaute,
And therfore er that age doth the devour.
Go love, for olde there woll no wight love the.
Let this proverbe a lore' unto you be,
To late iwar, quod Beaute, whan it paste,
And elde ydauntith daungir at the laste.
The king'is fole is wont to crie aloude,
Whan that he thinketh a woman bereth her hie,
So longe mote ye livin, and all proude,
Til crow'is fete growin undir your eie,
And sende you than a mirrour in to prie
In which that ye may se your face a morrowe:
Nece, I bid him wishin you no more sorowe.
With this he stinte, and cast adoune the hed,
And she began to brest and wepe anone,
And saide, Alas for wo! why n'ere I ded?
For of this world the faith is al agone:
Alas! what shuldin straunge unto me done
When he that for my beste frende I wende
Redith me love who shulde it me defende?
Alas! I would have trustid doutiles
That if that I through my disaventure
Had lovid eithir him or Achilles,
Hector, or any othir manir creture,
Ye n'old have had no mercy ne mesure
On me, but alwaie had me in repreve:
This false worlde, alas! who may it leve?
What! is this al the joy and al the fest?
Is this your rede? is this my blisful cas?
Is this the very mede of your behest?
Is this al paintid processe said (alas!)
Right for this fine? O lady mine Pallas,
Thou in this dredeful case for me purvey,
For so astonied am I that I dey,
With that she gan ful sorowfully to sike:
Ah! may it be no bet? (Quod Pandarus)
By God I shall no more come here this weke,
And God to-forne, that am mistrustid thus;
I se wel now ye settin lite of us
Or of our deth, alas! I, woful wretche,
Might he yet live of me were nought to retche.
O cruil god of Deth, dispitous Marte!
O Furies thre of hel! on you I crie,
So let me ner out of this house departe
Yf that I ment or harme or vilanie;
But sithe I se my lorde mote nedis die,
And I with him, here I me shrive, and sey,
That wickidly ye done us bothe to dey.
But sithe it likith you that I be ded,
By Neptunus, that god is of the se,
Fro this forthe shal I nevir etin bred
Til that I mine own hert'is blode maie se,
For certaine I wol die as sone as he:
And up he sterte, and on his way he raught,
Til she againe him by the lappe ycaught,
Creseide, which that wel nigh sterse for fere,
So as she was aye the most ferefull wight
That mightin be, and herde eke with her ere,
And sawe the sorowful ernest of the knight,
And in his prayir sawe eke non unright,
And for the harme eke that might fallin more,
She gan to rewe, and dredde her wondir sore:
And thus she thought; unhappis fallin thicke
Al day for love, and in suche manir caas
As men ben cruill in 'hem selfe and wicke;
And if this man sle here hemselfe, alas!
In my presence, it n'il be no solas:
What men would of it deme I can nat say;
It nedith me full slighly for to play.
And with a sorowful sighe she saide thrie,
Ah, Lorde! me is betidde a sory chaunce,
For mine estate lieth in a jeopardie,
And else mine em'is life lieth in balaunce;
But nathelesse with Godd'is guvirnaunce
I shal so done, mine honour shal I kepe,
And eke his life, and stintin for to wepe.
Of harmis two the lesse is for to chese;
Yet had I levir makin him gode chere
In honour than mine em'is life to lese;
Ye saine ye nothing ellis me requere.
No, wis, (quod he) mine owne nece so dere!
Now wel, (quod she) and I wol don my paine;
I shal mine herte ayen my lust constraine.
But that I n'ill nat holdin him honde,
Ne love a man, that can I naught ne may,
Ayenst my wil, but ellis wol I fonde,
Mine honour save, plese him fro day to day;
Therto n'olde I not onis have saide nay
But that I dredde as in my fantasie;
But *cesse cause aie cessith maladie.*
But here I make a protestacion
That in this processe if ye depir go
That certainly for no salvacion
Of you, though that ye stervin bothe two,
Though al the worlde on o day be my fo,
Ne shal I ner on him have othir routhe.
I graunt it wel (quod Pandare) by my trouthe.
But maie I trustin well to you (quod he)
That of this thing that ye han hight me here
Ye woll it holdin truely unto me?
Ye, doubtilesse, quod she, myne uncle dere!
Ne that I shall have cause in this matere
(Quod he) to plain or aftir you to preche?
Why no, parde; what nedith more speche?
Tho fellin thei in othir talis glade,
Till at the last, O gode eme! (quod she tho)
For love of God, whiche that us bothe ymade,
Tell me how first ye wistin of his wo;
Wot non of it but ye? He sayid No.
Can he well speke of love, (quod she) I preie?
Tell me, for I the bet shall me purveie.
Tho Pandarus a litil gan to smile,
And sayid, By my trouth I shall now tell:
This othir daie, nat gon full longe while,
Within the paleis gardin by a well
Gan he and I well halfe a daie to dwell,
Right for to spekin of an ordinaunce
How we the Grekis mightin disavaunce:
Sone after that begone we for to lepe
And castin with our dartis to and fro,
Till at the last he sayid he would slepe,
And on the grasse adoune he laied him tho;
And I aftir gan romin to and fro,

Till that I herd, as I walkid alone,
How he began ful wofully to grone.
Tho gan I ſtalke him full ſoftly behinde,
And ſikirly, the ſothè for to ſaine,
As I can clepe ayen now to my minde,
Right thus to Love he gan him for to plain:
He ſayid, Lorde, have routh upon my pain;
All have I ben rebell in mine entent,
Now (*mea culpa*) Lorde, I me repent.
O God! that at thy diſpoſicion
Lediſt forth the ſine by juſt purveiaunce
Of every wight, my lowe confeſſion
Accept in gre, and ſende me ſoche penaunce
As likith the; put from me diſperaunce,
That maie my ghoſt departe alwaie fro the:
Thou be my ſhilde for thy benignite.
For certis, Lorde, ſo ſore hath ſhe me wounded
That ſtode in blacke with loking of her eyen,
That to mine hert'is botome it is ſounded,
Through which I wot that I muſt nedis dien;
This is the worſt, I dare me nought bewrien,
And well the botir ben the gledis rede
That men 'hem wrien with aſhin pale and ded.
With that he ſmote his hedde adoune anone,
And gan to muttre I nat what truely,
And I with that gan ſtill awaie to gone,
And lete thereof as nothing wiſt had I,
And come again anon and ſtode him by,
And ſaied, Awake, ye ſlepin all to long;
It ſemith me nought that Love doth you wrong
That ſlepin ſo that no man maie you wake;
Who ſeie evir er this ſo dull a man?
Ye, frende, (quod he) doe ye your hedd'is ake
For love, and let me livin as I can:
But though that he for wo was pale and wan
Yet made he tho as freſhe a countenaunce
As though he ſhould have led the newè daunce.
This paſſid forth till now this othir daie
It fell that I come roming all alone
Into his chambre, and founde how that he laie
Upon his bedde; but man ſo ſorè grone
Ne herd I nevir; and what was his mone
Ne wiſt I nought, for as I was comming
All ſodainly he left his complaining,
Of whiche I toke ſomewhat ſuſpection,
And nere I come, and founde him wepè ſore;
And God ſo wiſe be my ſalvacion
As I had nevir routhe of nothing more,
For neithir with engine ne with no lore
Unnethis might I fro the deth him kepe,
That yet ſele I mine hertè for him wepe.
And God wot nevir ſith that I was borne
Was I ſo baſie no man for to ſowne,
Ne nevir was to wight ſo depe yſworne,
Er he me told who might yben his leche;
But not to you reherſin al his ſpeche,
Or all his wofull wordis for to ſowne,
Ne bid me nought, but ye woll ſe me ſwone;
But for to ſave his life, and ellis nought,
And to non harm of you, thus am I driven;
And for the love of God that us hath wrought
Soche chere him doth that he and I maie liven.
Now have I plat to you mine herte yſhriven,
And ſith ye wote that mine entent is clene
Take hede thereof, for none evill I mene.
And right gode thrift I pray to God have ye
That han ſoche one icaught withoutin net;
And be ye wiſe, as ye be faire to ſe;
Well in the ring than is the rubie ſet:
There werin nevir two ſo well imet
Whan ye ben his all whole as he is your:
The mighty God us grant to ſe that hour!
Naie, thereof ſpake I nat. A ha! (quod ſhe)
As helpe me God ye ſhendin every dele,
A, mercie, derè neee! anon (quod he)
What ſo I ſpake I ment it nought but wele,
By Mars the god that helmid is of ſtele:
Now beth not wroth, my blode, my neeè dere!
Now well (quod ſhe) foryevin be it here.
With this he toke his leve, and home he went;
Ye, Lorde, how he was glad and well bigon!
Creſeide aroſe, no lengir ſhe ne ſtent,
But ſtreight into her cloſet went anon,
And ſet her doune as ſtill as any ſtone,
And every worde gan up and doune to winde
That hé had ſaied as it came her to minde.
And woxe ſomedele aſtonied in her thought
Right for the newè caſe; but whan that ſhe
Was full avifid, tho found ſhe right nought
Of perill why that ſhe oughte aſerde be,
For man maie love of poſſibilite
A woman ſo that his herte maie to breſt
And ſhe nat love ayen but if her leſt.
But as ſhe ſat alone and thoughtè thus,
In field aroſe a ſkirmiſh all without,
And men cried in the ſtrete, Se! Troilus
Hath right now put to flight the Grekis rout;
With that gonne all her meine for to ſhout
A! go we ſe; caſt up the gatis wide,
For through this ſtrete he mote to paleis ride,
For othir waie is fro the yatis none
Of Dardanus, there opin is the cheine:
With that come he and all his folke anone
And eſie pace riding in routis tweine,
Right as his happie daie was (ſothe to ſeine)
For whiche men ſaith maie not diſtourbid be
That ſhal betidin of neceſſite.
This Troilus ſat on his baiè ſtede
All armid ſave his hedde full richily,
And woundid was his horſe, and gan to blede,
On whiche he rode a pace full ſoftily;
But ſoche a knightly ſight, lo! truily
As was on him was nat withoutin faile
To loke on Mars, that god is of Battaile.
So like a man of armis and a knight
He was to ſene, fulfilled of high proweſſe,
For bothe he had a bodie and a might
To doen that thing as well as hardineſſe,
And eke to ſene him in his gerè dreſſe,
So freſhe, ſo yong, ſo weldy, ſemid he,
Iswas an hevin on him for to ſe
His helme to hewin was in twentie places,
That by a tiſſue hong his backe behinde,
His ſhelde to daſhed with ſwerdis and with maces,
In whiche men might many an arowe finde
That thirlid had both horne, and nerfe, and rinde;

And aie the peple cried, Here cometh our joie,
And next his brothir holdir up of Troie!
For which he wext a little redde for shame
When he so herd the peple on him crien,
That to beholde it was a noble game
Now sobirliche ne cast adoune his eyen.
Creseide anon gan all his chere espien,
And let it in her herte so softly sinke
That to her self she sayed, Ho! give me drinke.
For of her owne thought she woxe al redde,
Remembring her right thus, lo! this is he
Whiche that mine uncle swereth he mote be dedde
But I on him have mercie and pite:
And with that ilke thought for pure shame she
Gan in her hedde to pull, and that as fast,
While he and all the peple forth by past:
And gan to cast and rollin up and doun
Within her thought his excellent proweſſe,
And his estate, and also his renoun,
His witte, his shape, and eke his gentilneſſe;
But moste her favour was, for his distresse
Was all for her, and thought it were a routh
To slaen soche one, if that he mente trouth.
Now might some envious wight janglin thus,
This was a sodain love; how might it be
That she so lightly lovid Troilus,
Right at the first sight of him? Yes, parde.
Now whoso saied so mote he nevir the,
For every thing a ginning hath it nede
Er all be wrought withoutin any drede.
For I saie nat that she so sodenly
Yase him her love, but that she gan encline
To liken' him tho, and I have told you why;
And aftir that his manhode and his pine
Made love within her herte for to mine,
For whiche by proceſſe and by gode service
He wanne her love, and in no sodain wise.
And also blisful Venus wele arayed
Satte in her sevinth house of hevin tho
Disposid wele, and with aspectis payed,
To helpin sely Troylus of his wo;
And, sothe to sayne, she n'as nat all a foe
To Troylus in hys natyvyte,
God wote that wele the sonir spedin he.
Now let us stinte of Troilus a throwe,
That ridith forth, and let us tourne fast
Unto Creseide, that heng her hedde full lowe
There as she satte alone, and gan to cast
Wherou she would apoinct her at the last,
If it so were her eine ne would yceſſe
For Troilus upon her for to preſſe.
And, Lorde! so she gan in her thought argue
In this matter of whiche I have you told,
And what to doen best were, and what eschue,
That platid she ful oft in many fold;
Now was her herte warme, now was it cold;
And what she thought of somwhat shal I write,
As mine authour listith to me t' endite.
She thought wele first that Troilus person
She knewe by sight, and eke his gentilneſſe,
And thus she said, All were it nought to doen
To graunt him love, yet for his worthineſſe
It wer honor with plaie and with gladneſſe
In honeste with such a lorde to dele
For mine estate and also for his hele.
Eke well wote I my king's sonne is he,
And sith he hath to se me soche delite,
If I would utterliche his sight yflie,
Par'aventure he might have me in dispite,
Thorough whiche I might stondin in worse plite;
Now were I not wise me hate to purchace,
Withoutin nede, there I maie stand in grace.
In every thing I wot there lieth mesure;
For though a man forbidith dronkineſſe,
He nought forbiddith that every creture
Be drinkileſſe for alwaie, as I gesse;
Eke sithe I wot for me is his distresse
I ne ought not for that thing him dispise,
Sith it is so he menith in gode wise.
And eke I knowe of longe time agone
His thewis gode, and that he n'is not nice,
No vauntour saine men certain he is none,
To wise is he to doen so grete a vice,
Ne als I n'ill him nevir so cherice
That he shall make a vaunt by juste cause;
He shall me nevir binde in soche a clause.
Now set a case, the hardist is iwis,
Men mightin demin that he lovith me;
What dishonour were it unto me this?
Maie I him let of that? why naie, parde;
I knowe also, and alwaie here and se,
Men lovin women al this toune about;
Be thei the wers? why naie, withoutin doubt.
I thinke eke how he worthy is to have
Of all this noble toune the thriftyist
That woman is; if she her honour save,
For out and out he is the worthyist
Save only Hector, whiche that is the best;
And yet his life lieth all now in my cure:
But soche is love, and eke mine avinture.
Ne me to love a wondir is it nought,
For well wote I my self, so God me spede,
All woll I that no man wist of this thought,
I am one of the fairist out of drede,
And godelyist, who so that takith hede,
And so men saine, in all the toune of Troie;
What wondir is though he of me have joie?
I am mine owne woman, well at ese,
I thanke it God, as aftir mine estate,
Right yong, and stond untied in lustie lese,
Withoutin jelousie, and soche debate;
Shall no husbonde saine unto me Checke mate,
For either thei ben full of jelousie,
Or maistirfull, or lovin novelrie.
What shall I doen? to what fine live I thus?
Shall I not love in case if that me lest?
What? pardieux I am not religious;
And though that I mine herte set at rest
Upon this knight, that is the worthiest,
And kepe alwaie mine honor and my name,
By all right it maie doe to me no shame.
But right as whan the sunne shinith bright
In March, that chaungith oftintime his face,
And that a cloud is put with winde to flight
Whiche ovirsprat the sunne as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan through her soule pace

That ovirſpradde her brightè thoughtis all,
So that for fere a moſte ſhe gan to fall.
That thought was this; Alas! ſith I am fro
Should I now love and put in jeopardie
My ſikirneſſe, and thraldin liberte?
Alas! how durſt I thinkin that ſothe?
Maie I not well in othir folke aſpie
Ther dredfull joie, ther constreint and ther pain?
Ther lovish non that ne hath why to plain?
For love is yet the moſtè ſtormie life
Right of himſelf that evir was begonne,
For ever ſome miſtruſt or ſome nice ſtrife
There is in love, ſome cloud evir the ſunne;
Thereto we wretchid women nothing conne
Whan us is wo but wepe, and ſit, and thinke:
Our wretche is this, our ownè wo to drinke.
Alſo theſe wickid tonguis ben ſo preſt
To ſpeke us harme, eke men ben ſo untrue,
That right anon as ceſſid is ther reſt
So ceſſith love, and forth to love anowe:
But *Harme adoe is'doen, who ſo it rue;*
For though theſe men for love 'hem firſt to rende,
Full ſharp beginning bredith oftè at ende.
How oftin time hath it yknowin ben
The treſon that to women hath be doe!
To what fine is ſoche love I can not ſene,
Or where becomith it whan it is go
There is no wight that wote I trowè ſo;
Wher it becometh he no wight on it ſporneth;
That erſt was nothing into nothing turneth.
How buſie (if I love) eke muſt I be
To pleſin 'hem that jangle' of love and deme,
And coyen 'hem that thei ſaie no harm of me!
For though there be no cauſe yet 'hem may ſeme
Al be for harme that folke ther frendis queme;
And who maie ſtoppin every wikkid tong
Or ſoune of bellis while that thei ben rong?
And after that her thought gan for to clere,
And ſaied, *He wolsthe that nothing undirtaketh*
Nothing achevith, be him loth or dere;
And with an othir thought her hert yquaketh;
Than ſtepith hope, and aftir drede awaketh;
Now hote now cold: but thus betwixin twey
She riſt her up and went her for to pley.
Adoune the ſtaire anon right tho ſhe went
Into her gardine, with her neeis thre,
And up and doun thei madin many' a went
Flexippe' and ſhe, Tarbe' and Antigone,
To pleyin, that it joie was to ſe,
And othir of her women a grete rout
Her folowed in the gardine all about.
This yerde was large, and railed al the aleyes,
And ſhadowed wel with blos'omy bowis grene,
And benchid newe, and ſondid all the weyes,
In whiche ſhe walkith arme in arme betwene,
Till at the laſt Antigone the ſheene
Gan on a Trojan ſong to ſingin clere,
That it an hevin was her voice to here.
She ſaied, O Love! to whom I have and ſhal
Ben humble ſubject, true in mine entent,
As I beſt can to you, Lorde, yeve I all
For evirmore mine hert'is love to rent,
For nevir yet thy grace to no wight ſent
So bliſsfull cauſe as me, my life to lede
In allè joie and ſuretie out of drede:
The bliſsful God hath me ſo well beſet
In love iwis, that all that berith life
Imaginin ne could how to be bet;
For, Lorde, withoutin jelouſie or ſtrife
I love one whiche that moſte is ententife
To ſervin well, unwerily' or unfained,
That evir was, and left with harme diſtained,
As he that is the well of worthineſſe,
Of trouth the ground, mirrour of godelihedde,
Of wit Apollo, ſtone of ſikirneſſe,
Of virtue rote, of luſte findir and hedde,
Thorough whiche is all ſorowe fro me dedde:
Iwis I love him beſt, ſo doeth he me;
Now gode thrift have he where ſo er he be;
Whom ſhould I thankin but you, god of Love,
Of all this bliſſe in whiche to bathe I ginne?
And thankid be ye, Lorde, for that I love:
This is the rightè life that I am inne,
To flemin all manir of vice and ſinne;
This doeth me ſo to vertue for to' entende
That daie by daie I in my will amende.
And who that ſaieth that for to love is vice
Or thraldome, though he ſele in it diſtreſſe,
He either is envious or right nice,
Or is unmightie for his ſhrewdèneſſe
To lovin; for ſoche manir folke I geſſe
Diſſamin Love as nothing of him knowe;
They ſpeke of Love, but nevir bent his bowe.
What is the ſunnè worſe of his kinde right
Though that a man for febleſſe of his eyen
Maie not endure on it to ſe for bright?
Or love the worſe that wretchis on it crien?
No wele is worth that maie no ſorowe drien;
And forthy, *Who that hath an hedde of verre*
Fro caſt of ſtonis ware him in the werre.
But I with al mine herte and all my might,
As I have ſaied, woll love unto my laſt
My owne dere herte, and all mine ownè knight,
In whiche mine herte ygrowin is ſo faſt,
And his in me, that it ſhall evir laſt:
All did I dred at firſt to love begin
Now wote I well there is no pain therein.
And of her ſong right with that worde ſhe ſtent,
And therewithall, Now necè (quod Creſeide)
Who made this ſong now with ſo gode entent?
Antigone anſwerde anon, and ſaide,
Madame, iwis it was the godelyiſt maide,
Of grete eſtate, in all the toune of Troie,
Who led her life in moſte honour and joie.
Forſothe ſo it yſemith by her ſong,
Quod tho Creſeide, and gan therwith to ſike,
And ſayid, Lorde! is there ſoche bliſſe emong
Theſe lovirs, as thei can ſo faire endite?
Ye, wiſſe, quod freſhe Antigone the white,
For all the folke that have or ben on live
Ne couldin well the bliſſe of love diſcrive.
But wenin ye that every wretche wote
The parfite bliſſe of love? why naie, iwis;
Thei wenin all be love if one be hote;
Do' waie, do' waie! thei wote nothing of this:
Men mote aſkin of ſainctis if it is

Ought faire in heven? and why? for thei can tell;
And askin fendes if it be foule in hell?
Creseide unto the purpose nought answerde,
But saied, Iwis it woll be night as faste;
But every worde whiche that she of her herde
She gan to printin in her hertè faste,
And aie gan love her lasse for to agaste
Than' it did erst, and sinkin in her herte,
That she wax somwhat able to converte.
The day'is honour and the heven'is eye,
The night'is foe, all this clepe I the sonne,
Gan westrin fast, and downward for to wrie,
As he that had his day'is course ironne,
And white thingis woxin all dimme and donne
For lacke of light, and sterris for to apere,
That she and all her folke in went ifere.
So whan it likid her to gon to reste,
And voidid werin thei that voidin ought,
She sayid, that to slepin well her leste;
Her women sone unto her bedde her brought:
Whan al was hush't, than laie she stil and thought
Of all this thing the manir and the wise;
Reherce it nedith not, for ye ben wise.
A nightingale upon a cedre grene
Undir the chambir wall there as she laie
Full loude ysong ayen the monè shene,
Par'aventure in his bird'is wise a laie
Of love, that made her herte freshe and gaie;
That herkenid she so long in gode entent
Till at the last the deddè slepe her hent.
And as she slept anon right tho her met
How that an egle, fethered white as bone,
Undir her brest his longè clawis set,
And out her herte he rent, and that anon,
And did his herte into her brest to gon,
Of which she nought agrose ne nothing smert,
And forthe he flyith with herte left for hert.
Now let her slepe, and we our talis holde
Of Troilus, that is to paleis ridden
Fro the scarmishe of the whiche I have tolde,
And in his chambir sate and hath abidden
Til two or thre of his messangirs yeden
For Pandarus, and soughtin him full fast
Til thei him found, and brought him at the last.
This Pandarus came leping in at ones,
And sayid thus, Who hath ben well ibete
To daie with swerdis and with slongè stones
But Troilus, that hath caught him an hete?
And gan to jape, and saied, Lorde how ye swete!
But rise and let us soupe and go to reste:
And he answerde him, Doe we as the leste.
With all the hast godèly as thei might
Thei sped 'hem fro the soupir and to bedde,
And every wight out at the dore him dight,
And wher' him list upon his waie he sped,
But Troilus thought that his hertè blodde
For wo til that he herdè some tiding,
And sayid, Frende, shall I now wepe or sing?
(Quod Pandarus) Be still and let me slepe,
And doe' on thy hode, thine nedis spedde ybe,
And chese if thou wolt sing, or daunce, or lepe:
At short wordis, thou shalt trowe all by me,
For, Sir, my nece woll doin well by the,
And love the best, by God and by my trothe,
But lacke of pursute marre it in thy slothe.
For thus ferforth I have thy werke begon
Fro daie to daie, till this daie by the morowe
Her love of frendship have I to the won,
And therto hath she laid her faith to borow;
Algate o fote is hameled of thy sorowe:
What should I lengir sermon of it holde?
As ye have herd before all he him tolde.
But right as flouris through the cold of night
Iclosid stoupin in ther stalkis lowe,
Redressin 'hem ayen the sunnè bright,
And spredin in ther kindè course by rowe,
Right so gan tho his eyin up to throwe
This Troilus, and saied, O Venus dere!
Thy might, thy grace, iheried be it here.
And to Pandare he held up both his hondes,
And sayid, Lorde, all thine be that I have,
For I am whole, and brostin ben my bondes:
A thousande Troyis who so that me yave
Eche aftir othir, God so wis me save,
Ne might not me so gladin: lo! mine hert
It spredith so for joie it woll to sterte.
But, Lorde, how shall I doen? how shall I liven?
Whan shall I next my own dere herte yse?
How shall this longè time awaie be driven
Til that thou be ayen at her fro me?
Thou maiest answere, Abide, abide; but *He*
That hangith by the necke, the sothe to saine,
In grete disese abidith for the paine.
All esily now, for the love of Marte,
(Quod Pandarus) for every thing hath time,
So long abide till that the night departe,
For all so sikir as thou liest here by' me,
And God toforne, I woll be there at prime,
And for thy werke somwhat as I shall saie,
Or on some othir wight this chargè laie.
For parde God wot I have evir yet
Ben redy the to serve, and to this night
Have I not fainid, but emforthe my wit
Doen all thy lust, and shal with al my might;
Doe now as I shall saine, and fare aught;
And if thou n'ilte, wite all thy selfe the care:
On me is nought along thine evill fare.
I wote well that thou wisir art than I
A thousande folde; but if I were as thou,
God helpe me so, as I would uttirly
Right of mine ownè honde write to her now
A lettir, in whiche I would telle her how
I farde amisse, and her beseche of routh:
Now helpe thy self, and leve it for no slouth.
And I my self shall therwith to her gon,
And whan thou wost that I am with her there
Worthe thou up on a coursir right anon,
Ye hardily, and that in thy best gere,
And ride forth by the place as naught ne were,
And thou shalt finde us (if I maie) sitting
At some windowe into the strete loking.
And if the list than maiest thou us salue,
And upon me make thou thy countenaunce,
But by thy life beware, and fast eschue
To tarien ought; God shild us fro mischaunce!
Ride forth thy waie and hold thy govirnaunce;

And we ſhall ſpeke of ſhe ſomwhat I trow,
Whan thou art gon, to doe thine eris glow.
Touching thy lettir, thou art wiſe inough;
I wot thou n'ilte it deignèliche endite
As make it with theſe argumentis tough,
Ne ſcriven-like, or craftily it write;
Beblotte it with thy teris eke alite,
And if thou write a godely worde all ſoft,
Though it be gode reherce it not to oft:
For though that the beſt harpour upon live
Would on the beſtè ſounid jolly harpe
That evir was with all his fingirs five
Touche aie o ſtring, or aie o warble harpe,
Were his naillis poinctid nevir ſo ſharpe,
It ſhuldè makin every wight to dull
To here his gle and of his ſtrokis full.
Ne jombre no diſcordaunt thing iſere,
As thus, to uſin termis of phiſike;
In lov'is termis holde of thy matere
The forme alwaie, and doe that it be like;
For if a paintir would ypainte a pike
With aſſ'is fete, and heddid as an ape,
It cordith not, ſo were it but a jape.
This counſaile likid well to Troilus,
But as a dredfull lovir he ſaied this;
Alas! my derè brothir Pandarus!
I am aſhamid for to write iwis,
Leſt of mine ignorance I ſaied amis,
Or that ſhe n'olde it for diſpite receve;
Than wer I ded, there might it nothing weve.
To that Pandare anſwerid, If the leſt
Doe that I ſaie, and let me therewith gon,
For, by that Lorde that formid eſt and weſt,
I hope of it to bring anſwere anon
Right of her hond, and if that thou n'ilte non
Let be, and ſovie mote he ben his live
Ayenſt thy luſt that helpith the to thrive.
(Quod Troilus) Depardieux I aſſent;
Sithe that the liſte I woll ariſe and write,
And bliſsfull God praie I with gode entent
The viage and lettir I ſhall endite
So ſpede it, as thou Minerva the White
Yevs thou me witte my lettir to deviſe;
And ſet him doun, and wrote right in this wiſe.
Firſt he gan her his right ladie to call,
His hert'is liſe, his luſt, his ſorowe's leche,
His bliſſe, and eche theſe othir termis all
That in ſoche caſe ye lovirs allè ſeche,
And in full humble wiſe, as in his ſpeche,
He gan him recommaunde unto her grace;
To tell all how it aſkith mokill ſpace.
And aftir this full lowly he her praied
To be nought wrothe though he of his folie
So hardie was to her to write, and ſaied
That love it made, or ellis muſt he die,
And pitouſly gan mercie for to crie;
And aftir that he ſaied (and lied full loude)
Himſelf was little worthe, and laſſe he coud,
And that ſhe would have his conning excuſed,
That litil was; and eke he dradde her ſo,
And his unworthineſſe aie he accuſed;
And aftir that than gan he tel his wo;
But that was endèleſſe withoutin ho;
And ſaid, he would in trouth alway him holde,
And redde it ovre', and gan the lettre folde:
And with his ſaltè teris gan he bathe
The ruby in his ſignet, and it ſette
Upon the wexe deliverliche and rathe,
Therwith a thouſande timis er he lette
He kiſte the lettre whan he had it ſhette,
And ſaide, Lettre, a bliſful deſtine
The ſhapin is; my lady ſhal the ſe!
This Pandare toke the lettre, and betime
A morowe to his nec'is paleis ſterte,
And faſt he ſwore that it was paſſid prime,
And gan to jape, and ſaide, Iwis mine herte
So freſhe it is (although it ſore ſmerte)
I maie nat ſlepe nevir a May'is morowe,
I have a joly wo, a luſty ſorowe.
Creſeidè, whan that ſhe her uncle herde,
With dredeful herte, and deſirous to here
The cauſe of his comming, right thus anſwerde;
Now by your faith, mine uncle (quod ſhe) dere!
What manir windis gidith you now here?
Tell us your joly wo and your penaunce;
How ſerforth be ye put in lov'is daunce?
By God (quod he) I hop alwaie behinde,
And ſhe to laugh as though her herte to breſte.
(Quod Pandarus) Loke alwaie that ye finde
Game in mine hode, but herkeneth if you leſt;
Ther is right now come to the toune a geſt,
A Greke eſpie, and tellith newè thinges,
For whiche I come to tell you newe tidinges.
Into the gardin go we', and ye ſhal here
Al privily of this a long ſermoun.
With that thei wentin arme in arme iſere
Into the gardin fro the chambre doun;
And what that he ſo ferre was that the ſoun
Of that which he ſpake no man herin might
He ſaid her thus, and out the lettir plight:
Lo! he that is al wholly your'is fre
Him recommaundith lowly to your grace,
And ſent to you this letter here by me;
Aviſith you on it whan ye han ſpace,
And of ſome godely anſwere you purchace,
Or helpe me God ſo, plainely for to ſaine,
He maie not longè livin for his paine.
Ful dredefully tho gan ſhe ſtondin ſtil,
And toke it not, but all her humble chere
Gan for to chaungin, and ſaid, Scripe nor bil,
For love of God, that touchith ſuch matere,
Ne bring me none; and alſo, uncle dere!
To mine eſtate have more regarde I pray
Than to his luſt: what ſhouldin I more ſay?
And lokith now if this be reſo'nable,
And lettith not for favour ne for flouthe;
To ſaine a ſothe, now is it convenable
To mine eſtate, by God and by my trouthe,
To take it, or to havin of him routhe
In harming of my ſelfe or in repreve?
Beare it ayen for him that ye on leve.
This Pandarus gan on her for to ſtare,
And ſayid, Now is this the gretiſt wonder
That evir I ſawe; lèt be this nice fare:
To dethè mote I ſmittin be with thonder
Yf for the citè whiche that ſtondith yonder

Would I a lettir to you bring or take
To harme of you: what liſt you thus it make?
But thus ye farin well nigh all and ſome,
That he that moſt deſirith you to ſerve
Of him ye retchin leſt where he become,
And whethir that he live or ellis ſterve;
But for al that, that er I maie deſerve
Refuſe it not, (quod he) and hente her faſt,
And in her boſome doune the lettir thraſt,
And ſaid her, Now caſt it awaie anon
That folke maie ſene and gaurin on us twey.
(Quod ſhe) I can abide till thei be gon;
And gan to ſmile, and ſaid him, Eme, I pray
Suche anſwere as you liſt your ſelfe purvey,
For truily I wol no lettir write.
No, than wol I, (quod he) ſo ye endite.
Therwith ſhe lough, and ſayid, Go we dine;
And he gan at himſelfe to japin faſte,
And ſayid, Nece, I have ſo gret a pine
For love, that everiche othir daie I faſte;
And gan his beſtè japis forth to caſte,
And made her ſo to laugh at his folie
That ſhe for laughtir wenid for to die.
And whan that ſhe was comen' into the hall
Now eme, (quod ſhe) we wol go dine anon;
And gan ſome of her women to her call,
And ſtreight into her chambre gan ſhe gone;
But of her beſineſſis this was one
Amongis othir thingis, out of drede
Ful privily this lettir for to rede.
Aviſid word by word in every line,
And founde no lacke; ſhe thought he coude his
And put it up, and went her in to dine; [gode,
And Pandarus, that in a ſtudie ſtode,
Er he was ware ſhe toke him by the hode,
And ſayid, Ye were caught er that ye wiſte.
I vouchſafe, (quod he) do whatere you liſte.
Tho wiſhin thei, and ſet 'hem doune and ete;
And aftir none ful ſlighly Pandarus
Gan draw him to the windowe nie the ſtrete,
And ſayid, Nece, who hath arayid thus
The yondir houſe that ſtante aforyene us?
Which houſe? (quod ſhe) and gan for to beholde,
And knewe it wel, and whoſe it was him tolde:
And fellin forthe in ſpeche of thingis ſmale,
And ſatin in the windowe bothè twey.
Whan Pandarus ſawe time unto his tale,
And ſawe well that her folke wer al awey,
Now, necè mine, tel on (quod he) I prey;
How likith you the lettre that ye wot?
Can he thereon? for by my trouth I n'ot.
Therwith al roſy hewid tho woxe ſhe,
And gan to hum, and ſayid, So I trowe.
Aquite him wel for Godd'is love (quod he)
My ſelfe tomedis woll the lettre ſowe,
And helde his hondis up, and fell on knowe.
Nowe godè nece, be it nevir ſo lite,
Yeve me the labour it to ſowe and plite.
Ye, for I can ſo writin (quod ſhe) tho,
And eke I n'ot what I ſhould to him ſay.
Naie, nece, quod Pandarus, ſaie you not ſo,
Yet at the leſt ythonkith him I pray
Of his gode will. O doth him not to dey!
Now for the love of me, my nece dere!
Refuſith not at this time my praiere.
Depardieux! (quod ſhe) God leve al be wele;
God helpe me ſo this is the firſt lettre
That er I wrote, ye al or any dele:
And into' a cloſet for to' aviſe her bettre
She went alone, and gan her herte unfettre
Out of Diſdain's priſon but a lite,
And ſet her doun and gan a lettre write,
Of whiche to tel in ſhorte is mine entent
Th' effecte as ferre as I can undirſtonde:
She thonkid him of al that he wel ment
Towardis her, but holdin him in honde
She n'olde not, ne makin her ſelvin bonde
In love, but as his ſuſtir him to pleſe
She would aie faine to done his hert an eſe.
She ſhette it, and to Pandare in gan gon
There as he ſat and lokid into ſtrete,
And doun ſhe ſet her by him on a ſtone
Of jaſpre', upon a quisſhen of golde ibete,
And ſaid, As wiſely helpe me God the grete
I nevir did a thing with morè paine
Than write this, to the which ye me conſtraine.
And toke it him: he thonkid her, and ſeide,
God wot of thing ful oftin lothe begonne
Comith ende gode: and necè mine Creſeide,
That ye to him of harde now ben iwonne
Ought he be glad, by God and yondir ſonne;
For why? men ſaine *Impreſſionis light*
Full lightly ben aie redy to the flight.
But ye han plaied the tiraunt al to longe,
And harde was it your hertè for to grave;
Now ſtinte, that ye no longir on it honge,
Al woldin ye the forme of daungir ſave,
But haſtith you to done him joye to have,
For truſtith wel, *To long idone hardneſſe*
Cauſith diſpite ful oftin for diſtreſſe.
And right as thei declarid this matere
Lo! Troilus right at the ſtret'is ende
Came riding with his tenthè ſomme ifere
Al ſoftily, and thidirwarde gan bende
There as they ſate, as was his waie to wende
To paleis warde, and Pandare him aſpide,
And ſaid, Nece, iſe who comith here ride!
O flie not in! he ſethe us I ſuppoſe,
Leſt he may thinkin that ye him eſchue.
Nay, nay, (quod ſhe) and woxe as redde as roſe;
With that he gan her humbly to ſalue
With dredful chere, and ofte his hewis mue,
And up his loke debonairly he caſt,
And beckid on Pandare and forth by paſt.
God wot if he ſat on his horſe aright,
Or godely was beſene that ilkè day;
God wot where he were like a manly knight;
What ſhould I dretche, or tel of his aray?
Creſeidè, which that al theſe thingis ſey,
To tell in ſhorte, her likid al ifere,
His perſon, his aray, his loke, his chère,
His godely manir and his gentilneſſe,
So well, that never ſithe that ſhe was borne
Ne haddin ſhe ſuche routhe of his diſtreſſe;
And howe ſo ſhe hath hard ben here beforne.
To God hope I ſhe hath now caught a thorne,

She shal nat pul it out this nexte wike;
God sende her mo such thornis on to pike!
Pandarus, whiche that stode her faste by,
Felte iron hotte, and he began to smite,
And seide, Nece, I praye you hertilie
Tel me that I shal askin you aliet;
A woman that were of his deth to wite,
Withouten' his gilt, but for her lacke of routh,
Were it wel done? (quod she) Naie, by my trouth.
God help me so, (quod he) ye say me sothe,
Ye selin wel your selfe that I nought lie.
Lo! yonde he rideth, (quod she) ye, so he doithe.
Wel, quod Pandare, as I have tolde you thrie,
Let be your nicete and your folie,
And speke with him in esing of his herte:
Let nicete nat do you bothe smerte.
But theron was to bevin and to done,
Considiring al thing it maie nat be,
And why? for shame; and it were eke to sone
To grauntin him so gret a liberte,
For plainly her entent (as sayid she)
Was for to love him unwist if she might,
And guerdon him with nothing but with sight.
But Pandarus thought it shal nat be so;
If that I maie this nice opinion
Shal nat ben holdin fully yeris two;
What should I make of this a longe sermon?
He must assent on that conclusion
As for the time, and whan that it was eve,
And al was wel, he rose and toke his leve.
And on his way full fast homewarde he spedde,
And right for joy he felte his hert to daunce,
And Troilus he founde alone abedde,
That laie as done these lovirs, in a traunce,
Betwixin hope and derke disesperaunce;
But Pandarus right as his in comming
He song, as who saith, Lo! somwhat I bring;
And seide, Who is in his bedde so sone
Yburied thus? It am I, frende, (quod he.)
Who? Troilus! naie, helpe me so the mone,
(Quod Pandarus.) Thou shalt up rise and se
A charme that was ysent right now to the,
The whiche can helin the of thine axesse,
If thou do forthwith all thy besinesse.
Ye, through the might of God (quod Troilus.)
And Pandarus gan him the lettir take,
And saide, Parde God hath yholpin us:
Have here a light, and loke on all these blake.
But ofsin gan the hert to glad and quake
Of Troilus while he it gan to rede,
So as the wordis yave him hope or drede.
But, finally, he toke al for the beste
That she him wrote, for somwhat he beheldc
On whiche he thought he might his herte rest,
Al covired she the wordis undir shelde;
Thus to the more worthy part he him helde,
That what for hope and Pandarus behestc
His gretc wo foryede he at the leste.
But as we maie al daie ourselvin se
Through more wode or cole kindlith the more fire,
Right so encrese of hope, of what it be,
Therwith sal oft encresith eke desire,
Or as an eke comith of a litil spire,
So through this lettir which that she him sent
Encresin gan desire, of whiche he brent.
Wherfore I say alway that day and night
This Troilus gan to desirin more
Then he did erst through hope, and did his might
To presin on, as by Pandarus lore,
And writin to her of his sorowes sore
Fro day to day: he let it nought refroide
That by Pandare he somwhat wrot or saide;
And did also his othir observaunces
That till a lovir longith in this caas,
And aftir that his dice turnid on chaunce
So was he eithir glad, or saide Alas!
And held aftir his gestis aie his pas,
And after suche answeris as he hadde
So werin his daies sory othir gladde.
But to Pandare alway was his recours,
And pitously gan aie to him to plaine,
And him beseught of rede and some socours;
And Pandarus, that sawe his wode paine,
Wext well nigh ded for routh, sothe for to saine,
And besely with al his hert gan caste
Some of his wo to sleen, and that as faste;
And saide, Lorde, and frende, and brothir dere!
God wot that thy disese ydothe me wo,
But wolt thou stintin al this woful chere,
And by my trouth or it be dayis two,
And God toforne, yet shal I shape it so
That thou shalt come into a certaine place
There as thou maiest thy selfe praien her of grace.
And certainly I n'ot if thou it wosse,
But thei that ben experte in love it say,
It is one of these thingis fortherith most
A man to have a leisir for to praie,
And sikir place his wo for to bewraie,
For in gode hert it mote some routh impresse
To here and se the giltlesse in distresse.
Par'aventure thinkist thou though it be so
That Kinde would her ydone for to beginne
To have a manir routh upon my wo,
Saith Daungir: Nay, thou shalt me nevir win;
So rulith she her hert'is gosse within
That though she bendin yet she stonte on rote;
What in effect is this unto my bote?
Thinke here ayen whan that the sturdy oke,
On which men hackith oftin for the nones,
Receivid hath the happy falling stroke,
The grete sweight makith it fall all at ones,
As done these grete rockis or these milnestones;
For swiftir course cometh thing that is of wight,
Whan it disendith, than done thingis light.
But rede that bewith doune for every blast
Ful lightly cesith winde it wol arise,
But so n'il not an oke whan it is cast,
It nedith me nought longe the for to' vise;
Men shall rejoysin of a grete emprise
Atchevid wel, and stout withoutin dout,
Al have men ben the lengir there about.
But, Troilus, now tel me if the lest
A thing whiche that I shal askin of the;
Whiche is thy brothir that thou lovist best
As in thy very hert'is privite?
Iwis my brothir Deiphobus, (quod he.)

Now, (quod Pandare) er hour'is twise twelve
He shal the ese unwist of it himselve.
Now let me' alone, and workin as I may,
(Quod he) and to Deiphobus went he tho,
Which had his lord and gretè frend ben aie;
Save Troilus no man he lovid so:
To tel in shorte, withoutin wordis mo,
(Quod Pandarus) I pray you that ye be
Frende to a cause whiche that ytouchith me.
Yes, parde, (quod Deiphobus) wel thou wost
Al that evir I may, and God tofore,
Al n'ere it but for the man I love most,
My brothir Troilus; but say wherfore
It is, for sithe the day that I was bore
I n'as, ne nevir more to ben I thinke,
Ayenst a thing that mightin the forthinke.
Pandarus gan him thanke, and to him seide,
Lo! Sir, I have a lady in this toune
That is my nece, and callid is Creseide,
To whiche some men would done oppressioun,
And wrongfully have her possessioun,
Wherfore I of your lordship you besèche
To ben our frende withoutin morè speche.
Deiphobus him answerde, O! is nat this
That thou spekist of to me thus straungely
Creseide, my frende? Pandarus said him Yes.
Than nedith (quod Deiphobus) hardily
No more of this, for trustith wel that I
Wol be her champion with spere and yerde;
I ne rought nat though all her foes it herde.
But telle me, thou that wost all this matere,
How might I best availin now? let se.
(Quod Pandarus) If ye, my lorde so dere,
Woldin as now do this honour to me
To prayin her to morowe, lo, that she
Came unto you her plaintis to devise
Her adversaries would of it agrise.
And if I more durst prayin you as now,
And chargin you to have so gretè travaile,
To have some of your brethrin here with you,
That mightin to her cause bettir availe;
Than wote I wel she mightin nevir faile
For to ben holpin, what at your instaunce,
What with her othir frendis govirnaunce.
Deiphobus, whiche that comin was of kinde
To al honour and bounte to consente,
Answerde, It shal be done; and I can finde
Yet greater helpe to this in mine entente:
What woldest thou saine if for Helen I sent
To speke of this? I trowe it be the best,
For she may ledin Paris as her lest.
Of Hector, which that is my lord my brother,
It nedith nat to praien him frende to be,
For I have herde him, o time and eke other,
Spekin of Creseide suche honour that he
Maie saine no bet: such hap to him hath she
It nedith nat his helpis more to crave;
He shal be sache right as we wol him have.
Speke thou thy selfe also to Troilus
On my behalfe, and prais him with us dine.
Sir, al this shal be done, (quod Pandarus)
And toke his leve, and nevir gan to fine,
But to his nece's house as streight as line
He came, and found her fro the mete arise,
And set him doun, and spake right in this wise;
He saide, O very God so have I ronne,
Lo! nece mine, se ye nat how I swete?
I n'ot whethir ye the more thanke me conne;
Be ye not ware how that false Poliphete
Is now about eftsonis for to plete,
And brisgin on you advocacies newe?
I? no, (quod she) and chaungid al her heure.
What! is he more about me for to doetche,
And done me wrong? what shal I don? alas!
Yet of him selfin nothing would I retche,
N'ere it for Antenor and Æneas,
That ben his frendis in such manir cas;
But for the love of God, mine uncle dere!
No force of that, let him have al ifere,
Withoutin that I have inough for us.
Nay, (quod Pandare) it shall nothing be so,
For I have ben right now at Deiphobus,
At Hector, and mine othir lordis mo,
And shortly makid eche of them his so,
That by my thrifte he shal it nevir winne
For aught he can, whan so that he beginne.
And as thei castin what was best to done
Deiphobus, of his owne curtisie,
Came her to praye in his propir persone
To holde him on the morowe companie
At dinir, whiche she ne wolde not denie,
But godely gan to his prayere obeye:
He thonkid her, and went upon his wey.
Whan this was don this Pandarus anone,
(To tellin in shorte) forth he gan to wende
To Troilus as stil as any stone,
And al this thing he tolde him orde and ende,
And how that he Deiphobus gan to blende,
And saide him, Now is time of that ye conne
To bere the belle to morow', and all is wonne.
Now speke, now pray, now piteously complaine,
Let nat for nicè shame, for drede or slouth;
Somtime a man mote tel his owne paine;
Beleve it, and she wol have on the routh;
Thou shalt ben savid by thy faith and trouth:
But well wot I thou now art in a drede,
And what it is I lay I can arede:
Thou thinkist now how should I don al this
For by my cheris mostin folke espie
That for her love is that I fare amis,
Yet had I levre' unwist for sorow die:
Nowe thinke nat so, for thou dest gret folie,
For I right now have foundin a manere
Of sleight for to coverin al thy chere.
Thou shalt gon evirnight, and that as blive,
Unto Deiphobus house as the to plaie,
Thy malady awaie the bette to drive;
For why? thou semist sike, the sothe to saie;
Sone after that doune in thy bedde the laie,
And saie thou maist no lengir up endure,
And lie right there and bide thine avinture.
Say that the sevir is wont the to take
The same time, and lastin till a morowe;
And let se now how well thou canst it make,
For parde sike is he that is in sorowe:
Go now, farewel, and Venus here to borowe

I hope and thou this purpoſe holdè ferme
Thy grace ſhe ſhal the fully there confermè.
(Quod Troilus) Iwis thou alle nedeleſſe
Conſailiſt me that ſikeliche I me faine,
For I am ſike in erneſt dontelèleſſe,
So that wel nigh I ſtervin for the paine.
(Quod Pandarus) Thou ſhalt the better plaine,
And haſt the leſſe nede for to counterfete,
For *Him men demin bote that men ſe ſweete.*
Lo! holde the at thy triſtè cloſe, and I
Shal wel the deere unto thy bowe ydrive:
Therwith he took his leve all ſoftily,
And Troilus to his paleis went blive,
So glad ne was he ner in all his live,
And to Pandarus rede gan al aſſent,
And to Deiphobus houſe at night he went.
What nedith it to tellin all the chere
That Deiphobus unto his brothir made,
Or his axis, or his ſikeliche manere
How men gon him with clothis for to lade
When he was laid, and how men would him glade?
But all for nought; he helde forth aie the wiſe
That ye han herde Pandare ere this deviſe.
But certaine is er Troilus him leide,
Deiphobus had praied him ovirnight
To ben a frende and helping to Creſeide;
God wot that he that grauntid anon right
To ben her fullè frend with all his might:
But ſuch a nede was it to praien him thenne
As for to biddin a wode man to renne.
The morowe came, and nighin gan the time
Of mealtide, whan that the faire Quene Helen
Shope her to ben an hour aftir the prime
With Deiphobus, to whom ſhe n'olde faine,
But as his ſuſtir homely, ſothe to ſaine,
She came to dinir in her plaine entent,
But God and Pandare wiſt al what this ment.
Came eke Creſeide all innocent of this,
Antigone her nece and Tarbe' alſo:
But flie we now prolixite beſt is,
For love of God, and let us faſt ygo
Right to the' effecte withoutin talis mo,
Why al this folke aſſemblid in this place,
And let us of ther ſaluingis pace.
Gret honour did 'hem Deiphobus certaine,
And fedde him wel with all that might 'hem like,
But evirmo, alas! was his refraine,
My godè brothir, Troilus the ſike,
Lithe yet; and therwithal he gan to ſike,
And after that he painid him to glade
Hem as he might, and cherè gode he made.
Complainid eke Helen of his ſikeneſſe
So faithfully, that pity was to here,
And every wight gan wexin for axes
A leche anon, and ſaide, In this manere
Men curin folke, this charme I wol the lere:
But there ſat one, al liſt her nat to teche,
That thought, yet beſt couldin I ben his leche.
Aftir complaint him gonnin thei to preiſe,
As folke don yet whan ſome wight hath begon
To preiſe a man, and up with preiſe him reiſe
A thouſande folde yet higher than the ſon;
He is, he can, that ſewe othir lordes kon;
And Pandarus of that thei would afferme
He nought forgate ther praiſing to conferme.
Herde all this thing feire Creſeide wel inough,
And every worde gan for to notifie,
For whiche with ſobre chere her hertè lough,
For who is that ne would her glorifie
To mowin ſuche a knight done live or die?
But al paſſe I, leſt ye to longe ydwell;
But for o ſine is al that er I tell.
The time came fro dinir for to riſe,
And as 'hem ought arifin everichone,
And gon a while of this and that deviſe;
But Pandarus brake al this ſpeche anon,
And ſaid to Deiphobus, Wol ye gon,
If it your will be, as I erſt you prayde,
To ſpekin of the nedis of Creſeide?
Helen, which that by the hondè her helde,
Toke firſt the tale, and ſaide, Go we blive;
And godely on Creſeidè ſhe behelde,
And ſayid, Jovis, let him nevir thrive
That doth you harm, and reve him ſone of live,
And yeve me ſorowe but he ſhal it rue
If that I may, and allè folke be true.
Tel thou thy nec'is caſe, (quod Deiphobus
To Pandarus) for thou canſt beſt it tell.
My Lordis and my, Ladies, it ſtant thus;
What ſhould I lengir (quod he) do you dwell?
He ronge 'hem out a proces like a bell
Upon her foe, that hight was Polyphete,
So heinous that men nightin on it ſpete.
Anſwerde of this eche worſe of 'hem than other,
And Polyphete thei gonnin thus to warien,
And honged be ſuche one were he my brother,
And ſo he ſhal, for it ne maie nought varien:
What ſhould I lengir in this talè tarien?
Plainliche al at onis thei her highten
To ben her frende in all that er thei mighten.
Spake than Helen, and ſaid to Pandarus,
Wot aught my lord my brothir of this matere,
I mene Hector, or wote it Troilus?
He ſaide her Ye; but wol ye me now here?
Me thinketh thus, ſith that Troilus is here
It were gode if that ye wouldin aſſent
She tolde him her ſelfe al this er ſhe went;
For he wol have the more her griefe at herte,
Bicauſe lo, ſhe a worthy lady is,
And by your wil I wol but in right ſterte,
And do you wete, and that anon iwis,
If that he ſlepe or wol aught here of this:
And in he lept, and ſaid him in his ere,
God have thy ſoule! for brought have I thy here.
To ſmilin of this gan tho Troilus;
And Pandarus withoutin rekining
Out went to Helen and Deiphobus,
And ſaid 'hem, So there be no tarying,
Ne more preſe, he wol well that ye bring
Creſeide my lady that is now here
And as he maie enduren he wol her here.
But wel ye wote the chambre is but lite,
And fewè folke may lightly make it warme;
Now lokith ye, for I wol have no wite.
To bring in preſe that might I ydon him harme,
Or him diſeſin for my bettir arme;

Wher' it be bet ſhe abide till eftſonis
Now lokith ye, that knowin what to don is.
I ſa, for me beſt is, as I can knowe,
That no wight in ne wende but ye twey,
But it were I, for I can in a throwe
Reherſe her caſe unlike that ſhe can ſey,
And aftir this ſhe may onis him prey
To ben gode lorde in ſhort, and take her leve;
This may not mokill of his eſe him reve.
And eke for ſhe is ſtraunge he woll forbere
His eſe, whiche that him darin nat for you;
Eke othir thing that touchith nat to her
He wol it tel, I wote it well right now,
That ſecrete is, and for the town'is prow:
And thei, that knew nothing of his entente,
Without more to Troilus in thei wente.
Heleine in all her godely ſoftly wiſe
Gan him ſalue and womanly to plaie,
And ſaied, Iwis ye mote algate ariſe;
Now, fair brothir, be all whole I praie;
And her arme right over' his ſhuldir laie,
And him with all her wit to recomfort;
As ſhe beſt could ſhe gan him to diſport.
So after this (quod ſhe) We you beſeke,
My dere brothir! Deiphobus and I,
For love of God, and ſo doeth Pandare eke,
To ben gode lorde and frende right hertily
Unto Creſeide, whiche that certainly
Receivid wrong, as wot well here Pandare,
That can her caſe well bet than I declare.
This Pandarus gan newe his tong affile,
And all her caſe reherce, and that anone;
Whan it was ſaied, ſone aftir in a while
(Quod Troilus) As ſone as I maie gone
I woll right fain with all my might ben one,
Have God my trouth, her cauſe for to ſuſteine:
Now good thrift have ye (quod Helen the Quene.)
(Quod Pandarus) And it your will ybe
That ſhe maie take her leve er that ſhe go.
O, ellis God forbid it! (tho quod he)
If that ſhe vouchſafin for to doe ſo.
And with that worde (quod Troilus) Ye two,
Deiphobus and my ſuſter lefe and dere,
To you have I to ſpeke of a matere,
To ben aviſid by your rede the better;
And found (as hap was) at his bedd'is hedde
The copie of a tretiſe and a letter
That Hector had him ſent to aſkin redde
If ſoche a man was worthy to ben dedde?
Wote I naught who, but in a griſly wiſe
He prayid 'hem anone on it aviſe.
Deiphobus gan this letter for to' unfolde
In erneſt grete, ſo did Helen the Quene,
And roming outwarde faſt it gonne beholde,
Dounward a ſteire, into an herber grene;
This ilke thing thei reddin 'hem betwene,
And largily the mountenaunce of an houre
Thei gonne on it to redin and to poure.
Now let 'hem rede, and tourne we anone
To Pandarus, that gan full faſte prie
That all was well, and out he gan to gone
Into the grete chambir, and that in hie,
And ſayid, God ſave all this companie!
Come, nece mine, my ladie Quene Helen,
Abidith you, and eke my lordis twene.
Riſe, take with you your nece Antigone,
Or whom you liſt, or no force hardily;
The laſſe preſſe the bettir: come forth with me,
And lokith that ye thonkin humbily
Them all thre, and whan ye maie godily
Your time iſee takith of them your leve,
Leſt we to long his reſtis him bireve.
All innocent of Pandarus entent,
Quod tho Creſeide, Go we, uncle dere!
And arme in arme inward with him ſhe went,
Aviſing well her wordis and her chere;
And Pandarus in erneſtfull manere
Sayid, All folke, for Godd'is love I praie,
Stintith right here, and ſoftily you plaie.
Aviſith you what folke ben here within,
And in what plite one is, God him amende!
And inward thus full ſoftily begin;
Nece, I conjure and highly you defende,
On his behalfe whiche that ſoule us all ſende,
And in the vertue of corounis twaine,
Slea nat this man that hath for you this paine.
Fie on the devill! thinke whiche one he is,
And in what plite he lieth; come of anone;
Thinke all ſoche taried tide but loſt it n'is,
That woll ye bothe ſaine whan ye ben one;
And ſecondly, there yet devinith none
Upon you two, come of now if ye conne
While folke is blent, lo! all the time is wonne,
In titiring, and purſute, and delaies,
The folke devine at wegging of a ſtre,
And though ye would han aftir merie daies
Than dare ye nat; and why? for ſhe and ſhe
Spake ſoche a worde; thus lokid he and he:
Leſt time be loſte I dare nat with you dele,
Come of therfore, and bringith him to hele.
But now to you, ye lovirs that ben here,
Was Troilus nat in a cankedort,
That laie and might the whiſpring of 'hem here,
And thought, o Lorde! right now rennith my ſort
Fully to die or have anone comfort,
And was the firſt time that he ſhould her praie
Of love; o mightie God! what ſhall he ſaie?

TROILUS & CRESEIDE.

PROŒMIUM LIBRI TERTII.

O Blissfull light! of whiche the bemis clere
Adornith alle the third hevin faire,
O ſoun'is life! o Jov'is doughtir dere!
Pleſaunce of love! o godely deboneire!
In gentle hertes ale redy to repaire,
O very cauſe of hele and of gladneſſe,
Iheried be thy might and thy godeneſſe!
In heven and hell, in yerth and the ſalt ſe,
Is felt thy might, if that I well diſceme,
As man, brid, beſte, fiſhe, herbe, and grene tre,
Thei fele in time with vapour eterne:
God lovith, and to love he woll naught werne;
And in this worlde no liv'is creture
Withoutin love is wrought or maie endure.
Ye, Jovis, firſt to thilke affectis glade,
Through whiche that thingis livin all and be,
Commendidin and amorous him made
On mortall thing, and as ye liſt ale ye
Yeve him in love eſe or adverſite,
And in a thouſande formis doune him ſent
For love in yerth, and whom you liſt he hent.
Ye fiers Mars, apeſin of his ire,
And as you liſt ye makin hertes digne,
Algatis them that ye woll ſet a fire
Thei dredin ſhame, and vicis thei reſigne;
Ye doen 'hem curteis be, freſhe, and benigne,
And hie or lowe aftir a wight entendeth
The joyis that he hath your might it ſendeth.
Ye holdin reigne and houſe in unite,
Ye ſothfaſt cauſe of frendſhip ben alſo;
Ye knowin all thilke covered qualite
Of thingis whiche that folke on wondrin ſo
Whan theſ can nat conſtrue how it maie go
She loveth him, or why he lovith here,
As why this fiſſre nat that comith to were.
Ye folke a lawe have ſet in univerſe,
And this knowe I by them that lovirs be,
That who ſo ſtrivith with you hath the werſe:
Now ladie bright, for thy benignite,
At reverence of them that ſervin the,
Whoſe clerke I am, ſo techith me diviſe
Some joie of that is felt in thy ſervice:
Ye in my nakid hert'is ſentiment
Inhilde, and doe me ſhewe of thy ſweteneſſe,
Caliope! thy voice be now preſent,
For now is nede; ſeeſt thou nat my diſtreſſe
How I mote tell anon right the gladneſſe
Of Troilus to Venus 'herying?
To whiche gladneſſe who nede hath God him bring!

INCIPIT LIBER TERTIUS.

Late all this mene while this sad Troilus
Recording his lesson in this manere,
Maseie, thought he, thus woll I saie and thus,
Thus woll I plain unto my ladie dere,
That worde is gode, and this shall be my chere,
This n'ill I nat foryetin in no wise:
God leve him werkin as he can devise.
And, Lorde! so that his herte began to quappe
Hering her come, and short gan for to sike;
And Pandaraus, that led her by the lappe,
Came nere, and gan in at the curtein pike,
And saied, God doe bote on all that are sike!
Se who is here you comin to visite;
Lo! here is she that is your deth to wite.
Therwith it semid as he wept almoste.
A! a! quod Troilus, so routhfully,
Where me be wo o mightie God! thou woste:
Who is all there I se nat truily.
Sir, (quod Creseide) it is Pandare and I.
Ye, swetè herte, alas! I maie nat rise
To knele, and do your honour in some wise.
And dressid him upward; and she right tho
Gan both her hondis soft upon him leie.
O, for the love of God doe ye not so
To me! (quod she.) Ey, what is this to sei!
Sir, comen' am I to you for causis tweie,
First you to thonke, and of your lordshipe eke
Continuaunce I wouldè you beseke.
This Troilus, that herd his ladie praie
Of lordship, him wox neithir quick ne dedde,
Ne might o worde for shame unto it saie,
Although, men shouldin smitin of his hedde,
But, Lorde! so he woxe sodainliche alle redde;
And, Sir, his lesson that he wendè conne
To prayin her is through his wit ironne.
Creseide all this espyid well inough,
For she was wise, and loved him ner the lesse,
All n'ere he' in all aparte, or made it tough,
Or was to bolde to sing a fol'is masse;
But whan his shame began somwhat to passe
His reasons, as I maie my rimis holde,
I woll you tell as techin bokis olde.
In chaungid voice, right for his very drede,
Whiche voice eke quoke, and therto his manere
Godelie abash't, and now his hewis rede
Now pale, unto Creseide his ladie dere,
With loke doune cast and humble yoldin chere,
Lo the aldirfirst worde that him asterte
Was twyis, Mercie, mercie, my dere herte!
And stint a while, and whan he might out bring
The nextè word, was, God wote for I have
As faithfully as I have had Ronning
Ben your'is all, God so my soule save,
And shall, till that I wofull wight be grave,
And though I dare ne can unto you plain
Iwis I suffir not the lasse pain.
Thus moche, as now, ah womanlichè wise!
I maie out bring, and if this you displese
That shall I wreke upon mine ownè life
Right sone I trowe, and doe your herte an ese,
If with my deth your hert I maie apese,
But sens that ye han herd me somwhat sey
Now retche I nevir how sone that I deie.
Therwith his manly sorowe to beholde
It might have made an herte of stone to rew,
And Pandare wept as he to watir would,
And pokid evir his nece newe and newe,
And sayid, Wo begon ben hertis true;
For love of God make of this thing an ende,
Or slea us bothe at ones er that ye wende.
I, what? (quod she,) By God and by my trouth
I n'ot nevir what ye wilne that I seie.
Eie! what? (quod he) that ye have on him routh
For Godd'is love, and doeth him nat to deie.
Now than thus, (quod she) I wollin him preie
To tellin me the fine of his entente;
Yet wist I nevir well what that he mente.
What that I mene, o my swete hertè dere!
(Quod Troilus) o godely freshe and fre!
That with the stremis of your eyin clere
Ye wouldin somtime frendly on me se,
And than agrein that I maie ben he
Withoutin braunche of vice on any wise
In trouthe alwaie to do you my servise,
As to my ladie right, and chefe resort,
With all my witte and all my diligence,
And I to have right as you list comfort,
Under your yerde egall to mine offence,
As deth, if that I brekin your defence,
And that ye digne me so mochil honour
Me to commaundin aught in any hour,
And I to ben your very humble, true,
Secrete, and in my painis pacient,
And evir to desirin freshly newe
To servin, and ben aie like diligent,
And with gode herte all wholly your talent
Recevin, in gre, how sore that me smerte:
Lo, this mene I, o mine owne swetè herte!

(Quod Pandarus) Lo! here an hard requeſt,
And reſo'nable a ladie for to werne;
Now necè mine, by Natall Jov'is feſt,
Were I a god ye ſhouldin ſterve as yerne,
That herin well this man wol nothing yerne
But your honor, and ſene him almoſte ſterve,
And ben ſo lothe to ſuffre' him you to ſerve.

With that ſhe gan her eyin on him caſt
Full eſily and full debonairly,
Aviſing her, and hied her not to faſt
With ner a worde, but ſaied him ſoftily,
Mine honour ſafe I woll well truily,
And in ſoche forme as ye can now deviſe,
Recevin him fully to my ſerviſe;

Beſeching him, for Godd'is love, that he
Would in honour of trouth and gentillneſſe,
As I well mene, eke menie well to me.
And mine honour with wit and buſineſſe
Aie kepe; and if I maie doen him gladneſſe
From hennisforthe iwis I n'ill not faine:
Now bethe all whole, no lengir ye ne plain.

But nathèleſſe this warne I you, (quod ſhe)
A king'is ſonne although ye be iwis,
Yet ye ſhall no more have ſovèrainte
Of me in love than right in that caſe is,
Ne n'ill I forbere if ye doen amis
To wrathin you, and while that ye me ſerve
Cheriſhe you right aftir that ye deſerve.

And ſhortily, dere herte, and all my knight!
Beth glad, and drawith you to luſtineſſe,
And I ſhall truely, with all my full might,
Your bittir tourin all to ſwetineſſe,
If I be ſhe that maie do you gladneſſe
For every wo ye ſhall recovir bliſſe.
And him in armis toke, and gan him kiſſe.

Fill Pandarus on knees, and up his eyen
To hevin threwe, and helde his hondis hie;
Immortall god! (quod he) that maieſt not dien
Cupide, of this thou maiſt the glorifie,
And Venus, thou maiſt makin melodie;
Withoutin honde me ſemith that in toune
For this miracle I here eche bell ſoune.

But ho! no more now of this ilke matere;
For why? this folke woll comin up anone
That have the lettir redde: lo! l'hem here;
But I conjure the Creſeidè anone,
And thou to Troilus, whan thou maiſt gone,
That at mine houſe ye ben at my warning,
For I full well ſhall ſhapin your comming;

And eſith there your hertis right inough,
And let ſe whiche of you ſhall bere the bell
To ſpeke of love, and right therwith be lough,
For there have ye a leiſir for to tell.
(Quod Troilus) How long ſhall I here dwell
Er this be doen? Quod he, Whan thou maieſt riſe
This thing ſhall be right as you liſt deviſe.

With that Helen and alſo Deiphobus
Tho comin upward, right at the ſtaire's ende,
And, Lorde! ſo tho gan gronin Troilus,
His brothir and his ſuſtir for to blende.
(Quod Pandarus) It time is that we wende;
Take, necè mine, your leve at them all thre,
And let 'hem ſpeke, and comith forth with me.

She toke her leve at 'hem full thriftily,
As ſhe well could, and thei her reverence
Unto the full ydiddin hertily,
And wondir well ſpekin in her abſence
Of her, in praiſing of her excellence,
Her govirnaunce, her wit, and her maners
Commendidin, that it joie was to here.

Now let her wende unto her owne place,
And tournin we to Troilus againe,
That gan full lightly of the lettir pace
That Deiphobus had in the gardine faine,
And of Helen and of him he would feine
Delivirid ben, and ſaied that him left
To ſlepe, and aftir talis have a reſt.

Helen him kiſt, and toke her leve as blive,
Deiphobus eke, and home went every wight,
And Pandarus as faſte as he maie drive
To Troilus tho came as linè right,
And on a paillet all that gladè night,
By Troilus he laie with merie chere,
And well was them that thei werein yfere.

Whan every wight was voided but thei two,
And all the doris werin faſt iſhet,
To tell in ſhort, withoutin wordis mo,
This Pandarus withoutin any let
Up roſe, and on his bedd'is ſide him ſet,
And gan to ſpekin in a ſobir wiſe
To Troilus as I ſhall you deviſe.

Mine aldirleviſt Lorde, and brothir dere!
God wot and thou that it ſate me ſo ſore
Whan I the ſawe ſo languiſhing to yere
For love, of whiche thy wo woxe alwaie more,
That I with all my might and all my lore
Have ever ſithin doen my buſineſſe
To bringin the to joie out of diſtreſſe;

And have it brought to ſoche plite as thou woſt,
So that through me thou ſtondiſt now in waie
To faring well, I ſaie it for no boſt;
And woſt thou why? but ſhame it is to ſaie,
For the have I begon a game to plaie
Whiche that I nevir doen ſhall eft for other,
Altho he were a thouſande-fold my brother;

That is to ſaie, for the am I become,
Betwixin game and erneſt, ſoche a mene
As makin women unto men to come,
All ſaie I nat, thou woſt well what I mene,
For the have I my nece, of vicis clene,
So fully made thy gentillneſſe to triſt
That all ſhall ben right as thy ſelfin liſt.

But God, that all wotteth, take I to witneſſe
That never this for covetiſe I wrought,
But onely for to abredge that diſtreſſe
For whiche well nie thou deydiſt, as me thought;
But, gode brothir, doith now as the ought
For Godd'is love, and kepe her out of blame,
Sins thou art wiſe, and ſave alwaie her name:

For wel thou woſte the name as yet of her
Emonges the peple' as (who ſaieth) halowed is,
For that man is unbore, I dare well ſwere,
That ever wiſt that ſhe yet did amis:
But wo is me that I that cauſe all this
Maie thinkin that ſhe is my necè dere,
And I her eme, and traitour eke ifere.

And wer it wift that I through mine engine
Had in my nece iput this fantaſie
To doen thy luſt, and wholly to be thine,
Why, all the worlde wouldin upon it crie,
And ſayin that I the worſt trecherie
Did in this caſe that evir was begon,
And ſhe fordon, and thou right nought iwon.
Wherefore er I woll ferthir gone or paas
Yet eſte I the beſeche and fully ſaie
That privite go with us in this caas,
That is to ſaine, that thou us never wraie;
And be not wrothe though I the oftin praie
To holdin ſecre ſoche an high matter,
For ſkilfull is, thou woſte well, my praier.
And thinke what wo there hath betid er this
For making of avaunttis, as men rede,
And what miſchaunce in this worlde yet there is
Fro daie to daie right for that wickid dede,
For whiche theſe wiſe clerkis that ben dede
Have evir this proverbid to us young,
That *The firſt vertue is to kepe the toung.*
And n'ere it that I wilne as now abredge
Diffuſion of ſpeche, I could almoſte
A thouſande oldè ſtories the aledge
Of women loſte through falſe and fol'is boſte;
Proverbis canſt thy ſelf inow, and woſte
Ayeniſt that vice for to ben a blabbe
All ſaied men ſothe, as often as thei gabbe.
O tongue, alas! ſo oftin here before
Haſt thou made many a ladie bright of hewe
Saied, Welawaie the daie that I was bore!
And many' a maidins ſorrowe for to newe;
And for the more parte all is but untrue
That men of yelpe and it wer brought to preve;
Of kindè none avauntour is to leve.
Avauntour and a lier all is one,
As thus; I ſuppoſe a woman graunt me
Her love, and ſaieth that othir woll ſhe none,
And I am ſworne to holdin it ſecre,
And aftir I goe tell it two or thre;
Iwis I am a vauntour at the leſt,
And lier eke, for I breke my beheſt.
Now lokith than if thei be not to blame
Soche manir folk, what ſhal I clepe 'hem, what?
That 'hem avaunt of women, and by name,
That yet behight 'hem nevir this ne that,
Ne knowin 'hem no more than mine olde hat:
No wondir is, ſo God me ſendin hele,
Though women dredin with us men to dele.
I ſaie nat this for no miſtruſt of you,
Ne for no wiſe men, but for folis nice,
And for the harme that in the worlde is now
As well for folie oft as for malice,
For well wote I that in wiſe folk that vice
No woman drat, if ſhe be well aviſed,
For *Wiſe men ben by folis harme chaſtiſed.*
But now to purpoſe, levè brothir dere!
Have all this thing that I have ſaied in minde,
And kepe the cloſe, and be now of gode chere,
For all thy daies thou ſhalt me true yfinde;
I ſhall thy proceſſe ſet in ſoche a kinde,
And God toforne, that it ſhall the ſuffiſe,
For it ſhall be right as thou wolt deviſe.

For well I wote thou meniſt well parde,
Therefore I dare this fully undirtake;
Thou woſt eke what thy ladie graunttid the,
And daie is ſet the charteris to make:
Have now gode night, I maie no lengir wake,
And bid for me, ſith thou art now in bliſſe,
That God me ſendè deth or ſonè liſſe.
Who might ytellin halfe the joie or feſte
Whiche that the foule of Troilus tho felte!
Hering the' effect of Pandarus beheſte
His oldè wo, that made his herte to ſwelt,
Gan tho for joie to waſtin and to melt,
And all the reheting of his ſikes ſore
At onis fled, he felt of 'hem no more;
But right ſo as theſe holtes and theſe hayis
That han in wintir dedde yben and drie
Reveſtin 'hem in grene whan that Maie is,
Whan every luſtie beſte liſtith to pleie,
Right in that ſelfin wiſe, ſothe for to ſeie,
Woxe ſodainly his hertè full of joie,
That gladdir was there nevir man in Troie;
And gan his loke on Pandarus up caſt
Full ſobirly, and frendly on to ſe,
And ſayid, Frende, in Aprilis the laſt,
As well thou woſt, if it remembir the,
How nigh the deth for wo thou foundè me,
And how thou diddiſt all thy buſineſſe
To knowe of me the cauſe of my diſtreſſe;
Thou woſt how long I it forbare to ſaie
To the that art the man that I beſt triſt,
And perill none was to the to bewraie,
That wiſt I well; but tell me if the liſt,
Sith I ſo lothe was that thy ſelf it wiſt,
How durſt I mo tellin of this matere
That quake now tho no wight maie us here?
But nathèleſſe, by that God I the ſwere,
That as him liſt maie all this world governe,
And if I lie Achillis with his ſpere
Mine hertè cleve, all were my life eterne,
As I am mortall, if I late or yerne
Would it bewraie, or durſt, or ſhould, or conne,
For all the gode that God made undir ſonne;
That rathir die I would and determine,
As thinkith me now, ſtockid in priſoun,
In wretchidneſſe, in filthe, and in vermine,
Captife to cruill King Agamemnoun;
And this in all the templis of this toun,
Upon the goddis all, I woll the ſwere,
To morowe daie, if that the likith here.
And that thou haſt ſo moche idoen for me
That I ne maie it nevirmore deſerve
This knowe I well, all might I now for the
A thouſande timis on a morowe ſterve;
I can no more but that I woll the ſerve
Right as thine own ſlave, whithir ſo thou wende,
For evirmore unto my liv'is ende.
But here with'al mine herte I the beſeche
That nevir in me thou deme ſoche folie,
As I ſhall ſainè, me thought by thy ſpeche,
That this whiche thou me doeſt for companie
I ſhould wenin it were a baudèrie;
I am not wode all if I leude yboe
It is nat ſo, that wote I well parde.

But he that goeth for gold or for richeſſe
On ſoche meſſagis, call him what ye liſt,
And this that thou doeſt, call it gentilneſſe,
Compaſſion, and felowſhip, and triſt,
Departin it ſo, for widewhere is wiſt
How that there is diverſite requered
Betwixin thingis like, as I have lered.

And that thou knowe I ne thinke not ne wene
That this ſervice a ſhame be or a jape,
I have my fairè ſuſtir Polyxene,
Caſſandra', Helen, or any of the frape,
Be ſhe never ſo faire or well iſhape,
Tell me whiche thou wilt of everichone
To have for thine, and let me than alone.

But ſith that thou haſt doen me this ſervice
My life to ſave, and for non hope of mede,
So for the love of God this grete empriſe
Performe it out, for now is the moſte nede;
For high and lowe, withoutin any drede,
I woll alwaie thine heſtis allè kepe:
Have now gode night, and let us bothè ſlepe.

Thus held 'hem eche of othir well apaied,
That all the worlde ne might it bet amende,
And on the morowe, whan thei were araied
Eche to his ownè nedis gan entende;
But Troilus, though as the fire he brende
For ſharpe deſire of hope and of pleſaunce,
He not forgate his gode wiſe govirnaunce;

But in himſelf with manhode gan reſtrain
Eche rakill dede and eche unbridlid chere,
That all tho that livin, ſothe for to ſaine,
Ne ſhould have wiſte by worde or by maniere
What that he ment as touching this matere,
From every wight as feure as is the cloud,
He was ſo wiſe, and well diſſimu'lon coud.

And all the while whiche that I now deviſe
This was his life, with all his fullè might,
By daie he was in Mart'in high ſervice,
That is to ſain, in armis as a knight,
And fore the more part all the longè night
He lay and thought how that he might yſerve
His ladie beſte, her thanke for to deſerve.

N'ill I not ſwerin, although he laie ſoft,
That in his thought he a'as ſomwhat diſeſed,
Ne that he tournid on his pillowes oft,
And would of that him miſſid have ben eſed;
But in ſoche caſe men be nat alwaie pleſed
For aught I wotè, no more than was he,
That can I deme of poſſibilite.

But certain is, to purpoſe for to go,
That in this while, as written is in geſte,
He ſawe his ladie ſometime, and alſo
She with him ſpake when that ſhe durſt and leſte,
And by ther both aviſe, as was the beſte,
Appoinctidin full warely in this node,
So as thei durſt, how they wouldin procede.

But it was ſpokin in ſo ſhort a wiſe,
In ſoche awaite alwaie, and in ſoche fere,
Leſt any wight divinin or diviſe
Would of 'hem twe, or to it laie an ere,
That all this worlde ſo leſe to 'hem ne were
As that Cupido would 'hem his graceſende
To makin of ther purpoſe right an ende.

But thilkè little that thei ſpake or wrought
His wifè ghoſte take nie of all ſoche hede,
It ſemid her he wiſtè what ſhe thought
Withoutin worde, ſo that it was no nede
To bid him aught to doen or aught forbede,
For which ſhe thought that love, al come it late,
Of allè joie had openid her the yate.

And ſhortly to this proceſſe for to pace,
So well his worke and wordis he beſet
That he ſo full ſtode in his ladie'sgrace
That twentie thouſande timis or ſhe let
She thonkid God ſhe evir with him met;
So could he him governe in ſoche ſervice
That all the worlde ne might it bet deviſe:

For why? ſhe founde him ſo diſcrete in all,
So ſecrete, and eke of ſuch obeiſaunce,
That well ſhe felt he was to her a wall
Of ſteele, and ſhalde from every diſpleſaunce,
That to yben in his gode governaunce,
So wiſe he was, ſhe was no more afered,
I mene as fere as it ought ben requered.

And Pandarus to quicke alwaie the fire
Was evir ilike preſt and diligent;
To eſe his frende was ſet al his deſire;
He ſhove aie on; he to and fro was ſent,
He lettirs bare whan Troilus was abſent,
That nevir man as in his frend'is nede
Ne bare him bet than he withoutin drede.

But now para'venture ſome man wonin wold
That every worde or ſonde, or loke or chere,
Of Troilus that I rehercin ſhold,
In al this while unto his lady dere,
I trowe it were a long thing for to here,
Or of what wight that ſtonte in ſuche diſtointe
His wordis al or every loke to pointe.

Forſothe I have not herde it done or this
In ſtorie none, ne no man here I wene,
And though I would yet I could not iwis,
For there was ſome epiſtel 'hem betwene
That would (as ſaith min auctor) wel contene
Nie halfe this boke, of which him liſt not write;
How ſhould I than a line of it endite?

But to the gret effecte than ſaie I thus,
That ſtonding in concorde and in quiete
This ilkè two, Creſeide and Troilus,
As I have tolde, and in this time ſwete,
Save onely ofte maightin thei not mete,
Ne leiſir have ther ſpechis to fulfoll,
That it beſt right as I ſhal you tell,

That Pandarus, that evir did his might
Right for the fine that I ſhal ſpeke of here,
As for to bringin to his houſe ſome night
His fairè nece and Troilus ifere,
Where as at leiſir al this high matere
Touching her love were at the ful up bounde,
Had out of donte a time to it yfounde;

For he with grete deliberacion,
Had every thing that therto might availe
Forne caſt, and put in execution,
And neithir lefte for coſte ne for travaile;
Come if 'hem liſte 'hem ſhouldè nothing faile
And for to ben in aught eſpyid there
That wiſte he wel an impoſſible were.

And dredfulleſſe it clere was in the winde
Of every pie and every letgame,
Now al is wel, for al the world is blinde
In this matir bothe fremid and tame;
This timber is al redy up to frame;
Us lackith naught but that we wetin wold
A certaine houre in whiche ſhe comin ſhold.

And Troilus, that al this purveiaunce
Knew at the ful, and waited on it aie,
And hereupon eke made gret ordinaunce,
And founde his cauſe and therwith his aray,
Yf that he were ymiſſid night or day,
There while he was aboutin this ſervice,
That he was gon to don his ſacrifice,

And muſte at ſuche a temple alone wake,
Anſwerid of Apollo for to be,
And firſt to ſene the holy laurir quake
Er that Apollo ſpake out of the tre,
To tellin him whan Grekis next ſhould fle;
And forthy let him no man, God forbede!
But praie Apollo helpin in this nede.

Now is there litill more for to be done
But Pandare up, and, ſhortly for to faine,
Right ſone upon the chaunging of the mone,
Whan lightleſſe is the world a night or twaine,
And that the welkin ſhope him for to raine,
He ſtreight amorowe unto his nece went,
Ye have wel herde the fine of his entente.

Whan he was comen' he gan anon to plaie,
As he was wont, and of himſelfe to jape,
And finally he ſwore, and gan her ſaie
By this and that, ſhe ſhould him not eſcape,
No lengir done him aftir her to cape,
But certainly that ſhe muſt, by her leve,
Come ſoupin in his houſe with him at eve.

At which ſhe lough, and gan her firſt excuſe,
And ſaid, it rainith, lo! how ſhould I gone?
Let be, (quod he) ne ſtonde not thus to muſe;
This mote be don, ye ſhal come there anone,
So at the laſt herof thei fel at one,
Or ellis ſoft he ſwore her in her ere
He n'olde nevir comin there ſhe were.

Sone aftir this ſhe unto him gan rowne,
And aſkid him if Troilus were there?
He ſwore her Nay, for he was out of towne,
And ſaid, What, nece, I poſe that he were there,
You durſt nevir thereof have the more fere?
For rathir than men might him there aſpie
Me levir were a thouſande folde to die.

Naught liſt mine auctour fully to declare
What that ſhe thought whan that he ſaid her ſo,
That Troilus was out of toune ifare,
And if he ſaidè therof ſoth or no,
But that without awaite with him to go
She grauntid him, ſithe he her that beſought,
And as his nece obeyid as her ought.

But nathèleſſe yet gan ſhe him beſeche,
Although with him to gone it was no fere,
For to beware of goſſithe peplis ſpeche,
That dremin thingis whiche that nevir were,
And well aviſin him whom he brought there;
And ſaid him, Eme, ſens I muſt on you triſt
Loke al be wel; I do now as you liſt.

He ſwore her this by ſhockis and by houes,
And by the goddis that in hevin dwell,
Or ellis were him levir ſoule and bones
With Pluto King as depè ben in hell
As Tantalus: what ſhouldin I more tell?
Whan al was wel he roſe and toke his leve,
And ſhe to ſoupir came whan it was eve,

With a certaine numbre of her owne men,
And with her fayir nece Antigone,
And othir of her women nine or ten;
But who was glad nowe, who, as trowyin ye?
But Troilus, that ſtode and might it ſe
Throughout a litil window in a ſtewe,
Ther he beſhet till midnight was in mewe,

Unwiſt of every wight but of Pandare.
But to the point. Now whan that ſhe was come
With al joie, and all her frendis in fare,
Her eme anone in armis hath her nome,
And aftir to the ſoupir al and ſome,
Whan as time was, ful ſofte thei 'hem yſet,
God wot there was no deinte fernè to fet.

And aftir ſoupir gonain thei to riſe,
At eſe wel, with hertis full freſh and glade,
And wel was him that coudè beſt deviſe
To likin her, or that her laughin made:
He ſonge, ſhe plaide; he tolde a tale of Wade;
But at the laſt, as every thing hath ende,
She toke her leve, and nedis would thens wende.

But, o Fortune! executrice of wierdes,
O influenceis of theſe hevins hie!
Soth is that undir God ye ben our hierdes,
Though to us beſtis ben the cauſis wrie;
This mene I now, for ſhe gan homward hie;
But execute was al beſide her leve
The goddis wil, for whiche ſhe muſt bileve.

The bentè mone with her hornis all pale,
Saturn and Jove, in Cancro joynid were,
That ſuche a raine from hevin gan availe
That every manir woman that was there
Had of that ſmoky raine a very fere,
At the which Pandare tho lough, and ſaid thenne,
Now were it time a lady to gone henne?

But, gode nece, if that I might evir pleſe
You any thing, than pray I you (quod he)
To don mine hert as now ſo gret an eſe
As for to dwell here al this night with me;
For why? this is your owne houſe parde,
For by my trouthe, I ſay it nat in game,
To wende as nowe it were to me a ſhame.

Creſeidè, which that could as mokil gode
As halfe a world, toke hede of his prayere,
And ſens it rained, and al was in a flode,
She thought as gode chepe may I dwellin here,
And graunt it gladly with a frend'is chere,
And have a thonke, as grutche and than abide,
For home to gon it may nat well betide.

I wel, (quod ſhe) mine uncle leſe and dere
Sens that you liſt; it ſkil is to be ſo;
I am right glad with you to dwellin here;
I ſeidè but in game that I wolde goe.
Iwis graunt mercy! necé, (quod he) tho;
Were it a game or no, the ſothe to tell,
Now am I glad ſens that you liſt to dwell.

Thus al is wel; but tho began aright
The newè joy, and al the feſt againe;
But Pandarus, if godely had he might,
He would have hyid her to bedde full faine;
And ſaid, O Lorde! this is an hugè raine,
This were a wethir for to ſlepin in,
And that I rede us ſonè to begin:
And, neccè, wot ye where I wol you laie?
For that we ſhul nat liggin ferre aſonder,
And for ye neithir ſhullin, dare I ſaie,
Herin thè noiſe of rainis ne of thonder,
By God right in my litil cloſet yonder,
And I wol in that uttir houſe alone
Ben wardain of your women everichone;
And in this middle chambre that ye ſe
Shal all your women ſlepin wel and ſofte,
And there I ſayid ſhal your ſelvin be.
And if ye liggin wel to night come ofte,
And carith not what wethir is aloſte.
Goth in anone, and whan ſo that ye leſt
Go we to ſlepe, I trowe it be the beſt.
There n'is no morè, but here aſtir ſone
Thei drank, voidid, and curtins drew anone;
Gan every wight that hadde nought to done
More in the place out of the chambre gone;
And evir more ſo ſternèliche it rone,
And blewe therwith ſo wonderlichè loude,
That wel nigh no man herin othir coude,
Tho Pandarus her eme, right as him ought,
With women ſuche as were her moſt aboute,
Ful glad unto her bedd'is ſide her brought,
And toke his leve, and gan ful lowe to loute,
And ſaid, Here at this cloſet dore withoute
Right ovirthwart your women liggin all,
That whom ye liſt of 'hem ye maie ſone call.
So whan that ſhe was in the cloſet laide,
And al her women forth by ordinaunce
A bedde werin, there as I have yſaide,
There n'as no more to ſkippin nor to praunce
But bodin go to beddè with miſchaunce,
If any wight ſtering were any where,
And let 'hem ſlepin that abedde ywere.
But Pandarus, that wel couthe eche adele
The olde daunce, and every point therin,
Whan that he wiſtè that all thing was wele,
He thought he wolde upon his werke begin,
And gan the ſtewè dore all ſoft unpin
As ſtil as ſtone, withoutin lengir lette;
By Troilus adoun right he him ſette.
And, ſhortly to the pointe right for to gone,
Of al this werke he told him orde and ende,
And ſayid, Make the redy right anone,
For thou ſhalt into hevin bliſſe ywende.
Now bliſsful Venus! thou me grace yſende,
(Quod Troilus) for nevir yet no nede
Had I er now, ne halfindele the drede.
(Quod Pandarus) Ne drede the ner a dele,
For it ſhal be right as thou wolt deſire;
So thrive I this night ſhal I make it wele,
Or caſtin all the gruil in the fire.
Yet, bliſsful Venus! this night thou me' enſpire,
(Quod Troilus) as wis as I the ſerve,
And evir bet and bet ſhal til I ſherve,
And if I had, o Venus ful of mirthe!
Aſpectis badde of Mars or of Saturne,
Or thou Combuſte, or let were in my birth,
Thy father pray I al thilke harme diſturne
Of grace, and that I glad aien maie turne,
For love of him thou lovideſt in the ſhawe,
I mene Adon, that with the bore was ſlawe:
O Jove! eke for the love of faire Europe,
The which in form of bulle awaie thou ſet;
Now helpe, o Mars! that with thy blody cope,
For love of Cypria, thou me nought ne let;
O Phœbus! thinke when Daphne her ſelve ſhet
Undir the barke, and laurir woxe for drede,
Yet for her love o helpe me at this nede!
O Mercurie! for the love of her eke
For which Pallas was with Aglauros wrothe
Now helpe; and eke Diane! I the beſeke
That this viage ne be nat to the lothe;
O Fatall Suſtrin! whiche or any clothe
Me ſhapin was my deſtine me ſponne,
So helpith to this werke that is begonne!
(Quod Pandarus) Thou wretchid mouc'is hert,
Art thou agaſt ſo that ſhe wol the bite?
Why, do on this furred cloke upon thy ſherte,
And folowe me, for I wol have the wite,
But bide, and let me gon before alite;
And with that worde he gan undone a trappe,
And Troilus he brought in by the lappe.
The ſternè winde ſo loude began to route
That no wight other'is noiſe might yhere,
And thei that layin at the dore without
Full ſikirly thei ſleptin all ifere;
And Pandarus with a ful ſobre chere
Goth to the dore anon withoutin lette
There as thei lay, and ſoftily it ſhette;
And as he came ayenwarde privily
His nece awoke, and aſkith, Who goeth there?
Mine ownè dere nece! (quod he) it am I,
Ne wondrith not, ne have of it no fere;
And nere he came, and ſaid her in her ere,
No worde for love of God I you beſeche,
Let no wight riſe and herin of our ſpeche.
What! whiche waie be ye comen? *Benedicite!*
(Quod ſhe) and how thus unwiſte of 'hem all?
Here at this ſecret trappè dore (quod he.)
(Quod tho Creſeide) Let me ſome wight call.
Eigh! God forbid that it ſhould ſo befall
(Quod Pandarus) that ye ſuche foly wrought!
Thei might demin thing that thei nevir thought.
It is nat gode a ſleping hounde to wake.
Ne yeve a wight a cauſe for to divine;
Your women ſlepin al I undirtake,
So that for them the houſe men mightin mine,
And ſlepin wollen till the ſunnè ſhine,
And when my tale ybrought is to an ende
Unwiſt right as I came ſo wol I wende.
Now, neccè mine, ye ſhul well undirſtonde,
(Quod he) ſo as ye women demin all,
That for to holde in love a man in honde,
And him her leſe and her dere hert to call,
And makin him an how above a call,
I mene, as love an othir in mene while,
She doth her ſelfe a ſhame and him a gile.

Now wherby that I tellin you al this
Ye wote your ſelfe as wel as any wight,
How that your love al fully grauntid is
To Troilus, that is the worthieſt wight
One of the world, and therto trouth iplight,
That but it were on him alonge ye n'olde
Him nevir falſin while ye levin ſholde.

Now ſtonte it thus, that ſith I fro you went
This Troilus, right platly for to ſeine,
Is through a guttir by a privy went
Into my chambre come in al this reine,
Unwiſt of every manir wight certaine
Save of my ſelfe, as wiſely have I joie,
And by the faith I owe Priam of Troie:

And he is come in ſuche paine and diſtreſſe
That but he be all fully wode by this
He ſodainly mote fall into wodeneſſe
But if God helpe: and the cauſe why is this,
He ſaith him told is of a frende of his
How that ye ſhould love one that hight Horaſt,
For ſorow of which this night ſhal be his laſt.

Creſeide, whiche that al this wondir herde,
Gan ſodainly aboute her hert to colde,
And with a ſigh ſhe ſorowfully anſwerd,
Alas! I wende whoſoere talis tolde,
My dere hert, certis, eme, would me nat holde
So lightly faulſe: alas! conceitis wrong
What harme thei done! for now live I to long.

Horaſte, alas! and falſin Troilus!
I knowe him not, God helpe me ſo! (quod ſhe.)
Alas! what wickid ſpirite tolde him thus?
Now certis, eme, to morow' and I him ſe
I ſhal therof as full excuſin me
As evir did woman, if that him like,
And with that worde ſhe gan full ſore to ſike.

O God! (quod ſhe) ſo worldly ſelineſſe,
Whiche clerkis callin falſe felicite,
Ymedlid is with many' a bitterneſſe
Ful anguiſhous, that is, God wote, (quod ſhe)
Condicion of veine proſperite,
For eithir joyis comin nat ifere,
Or ellis no wight hath 'hem alwaie here.

O brotil wele of mann'is joie unſtable!
With what wight ſo thou be, or how thou playe,
Eithir he wote that thou joie art mutable,
Or wote it nate, it mote been one of twaie:
Now if he wote it nat how maie he ſaie
That he hath very joie and ſilineſſe
That is of ignoraunce aie in darkeneſſe?

Now if he wote that joy is tranſitory,
(As every joie of worldly thing mote flie)
Than every time he that hath in memory
The drede of leſing makith him that he
May in no parfite ſikerneſſe ybe,
And if to leſe his joie he ſet a mite
Than ſemith it that joy is worth ful lite.

Wherfore I wol define in this matere,
That truily for aught I can eſpie
There is no very wele in this world here;
But o thou wickid ſerpent Jealouſie!
Thou miſbelevid, envious folie,
Why haſt thou Troilus made me to untriſt,
That nevir yet agilte him that I wiſte?

(Quod Pandarus) Thus fallin is this caas.
Why, uncle mine, (quod ſhe) who tolde him this?
And why doth my dere-hertè thus alas!
Ye wote, ye, nece min, (quod he) what it is;
I hope al ſhal be wel that is amis,
For ye maie quenche al this if that you leſt;
And doeth right ſo; I holde it for the beſt.

So ſhal I do to morow', iwis, (quod ſhe)
And God toforne, ſo that it ſhal ſuffice.
To morow, alas! that were faire (quod he.)
Nay, nay, it maie nat ſtondin in this wiſe,
For, necè mine, thus writin clerkis wiſe,
That *Peril is with dretching in ydrawe;*
Nay, ſuche abodis ben nat worthe an hawe.

Nece, allè thing hath time, I dare avowe,
For whan a chambre' a fire is or an hall,
Wel more nede is it ſodainly reſcowe
Than to diſpute and aſke amongis all
How is this candil in the ſtrawe yfall?
Ah, *benedicite!* for al among that fare
The harme is done, and farwel feldèfare.

And, necè mine, ne take it nat agrefe
If that ye ſuffre' him al night in this wo;
God helpe me ſo ye had him nevir lefe;
What dare I ſain, now there is but we two,
But wel I wote that ye wol nat ſo do,
Ye ben to wiſe to don ſo gret folie,
To put his life al night in jeopardie.

Had I him nevir lefe? by God I wene
Ye ne had nevir thing ſo leſe, (quod ſhe.)
Now by my thrifte (quod he) that ſhall be ſene,
For ſithe ye make this enſample of me,
If I al night would him in ſorowe ſe
For al the treſour in the toune of Troie,
I bidde God that I nevir mote have joie.

Now loke than if ye that ben his love
Should put his life all night in jeopardy
For thing of nought: now by that God above
Nat onely this delaie cometh of folie
But of malice, if that I ſhould nat lie:
What! platly and ye ſuffre' him in diſtreſſe
Ye neithir bounte done ne gentilneſſe.

(Quod tho Creſeide) Wol ye done o thing,
And ye therwith ſhal ſtinte al his diſeſe,
Have here and berith him this blewè ring,
For there is nothing might him bettir pleſe
Save I myſelfe, ne more his hert apeſe;
And ſaie, my derè herte! that his ſorowe
Is cauſeleſſe, that ſhal he ſene to morowe.

A ringe! (quod he) ye haſilwodis ſhaken!
Ye, necè mine, that ring muſt have a ſtone,
A ſtone which that might ded men alive maken,
And ſuche a ring trowe I that ye have none:
Diſcrecion out of your hed is gone,
That fele I now, (quod he) and that is routhe;
O time iloſt, wel maiſt thou curſin ſlouthe!

Wote ye not wel that noble and hie corage
Ne ſoroweth nat, ne ſtintith eke for lite,
But if a fole were in a jelous rage
I n'olde ſettin at his ſorowe a mite,
But ſeſte him with a few wordis white
An othir deie, whan that I might him finde;
But this thing ſtant al in anothir kinde;

This is ſo gentle' and ſo tendir of herte
That with his deth he wol his ſorowes wreke,
For truſt it wel how ſore ſo that him ſmerte
He wol to you no jelous wordis ſpeke;
And forthy, nece, er that his hert to breke,
So ſpeke your ſelfe to him of this matere,
For with a worde ye maie his hertè ſtere.

Now have I tolde what peril he is in,
And his coming unwiſt to every wight,
Ne parde harme maie there be none ne ſin,
I wol my ſelf be with you al this night;
Ye know eke how it is your ownè knight,
And by that right ye muſt upon him triſte,
And I al preſt to ſetche him when you liſte.

This accident ſo pitous was to here,
And eke ſo like a ſothe, at primè face,
And Troilus her knight, to her ſo dere,
His prive comming, and the ſikir place,
That though ſhe thought ſhe did him than a grace,
Conſidirid all thingis as they ſtode,
No wondir is, ſens he did al for gode.

Creſeide anſwerde, As wiſely God at reſt
My ſoulè bring as me is for him wo,
And, eme, iwis ſaine would I don the beſt,
If that I a grace had for to do ſo;
But whethir that ye dwel or for him go
I am, til God me bettir mindè ſende,
At Dulcarnon, right at my witt'is ende.

(Quod Pandarus) Ye, necè, wol ye here,
Dulcarnon clepid is fleming of wretches,
It ſemith hard, for wretchis wol nought lere
For very ſlouthe, or othir wilfull tetches,
This ſaid is by them that ben't worth two fetches;
But ye ben wiſe, and that ye han on honde
N'is neithir harde ne ſkilful to withſtonde.

Than, eme, (quod ſhe) doeth hereof as you liſt,
But er he come I wol up firſt ariſe,
And for the love of God, ſens al my triſt
Is on you two, and ye beth bothè wiſe,
So werkith now, in ſo diſcrete a wiſe,
That I honour maie have and he pleſaunce,
For I am here al in your govirnaunce.

That is wel ſaid, (quod he) my necè dere!
There gode thrifte on that wiſè gentill herte;
But liggith ſtill, and takith him right here,
It nedith nat no ſerthir for him ſterte;
And eche of you eſe othir ſorowes ſmert,
For love of God and Venus I the herie,
For ſone hope I that we ſhullin ben merie.

This Troilus full ſone on knees him ſette
Ful ſobrely right by her bedd'is hed,
And in his beſtè wiſe his lady grette;
But Lord! ſo ſhe woxe ſodainliche all red,
And thought anone how that ſhe ſhulde be dedde;
She couldè nat o worde aright out bringe,
So ſodainly for his ſodaine cominge.

But Pandarus, that ſo wel could ſele
In every thing, to plaie anon began,
And ſayid, Nece, ſe how this lord gan knele,
Now for your trouthè ſe this gentil man;
And with that worde he for a quiſhin ran,
And ſaid, Knelith now whilis that thou leſte,
There God your hertis bring ſone to reſte.

Can I naught ſain, for ſhe bad him nat riſe,
If ſorowe' it put out of her remembraunce,
Or ellis that ſhe toke it in the wiſe
Of duètie as for his obſervaunce;
But well finde I ſhe did him this pleſaunce,
That ſhe him kiſt, although ſhe ſikid ſore,
And bad him ſit adoun withoutin more.

(Quod Pandarus) Now wol ye well begin,
Now doth him ſittin doune, gode nece dere!
Upon your bedd'is ſide, al there within,
That eche of you the bet maie othir here;
And with that worde he drew him to the fere,
And toke a light, and found his countinaunce
As for to loke upon an old romaunce.

Creſeide, that was Troilus lady right,
And clere ſtode in a grounde of ſikirneſſe,
All thought ſhe that her ſervaunt and her knight
Ne ſhulde of trouthe none unright of her geſſe,
Yet nathèleſſe, conſidrid his diſtreſſe,
And that love is in cauſe of ſuche folie,
Thus to him ſpake ſhe of his jelouſie:

Lo, hertè mine! as would the excellence
Of love, aienſt the whiche that no man maie,
Ne ought eke godely makin reſiſtence,
And eke bicauſe I feltè wel and ſaie
Your grete trouth and ſervice every daie,
And that your hert al mine was, ſoth to ſaine,
This drove me for to rewe upon your paine;

And your godenes have I founden' alway yet,
Of whiche my dere hert, and al my knight!
I thanke it you, as ferre as I have wit,
Al can I nat as much as it were right;
And I emforth my conning and my might
Have, and aie ſhal, how ſore ſo that me ſmert,
Ben to you trewe and whole with all mine hert;

And dredileſſe that ſhal be founde at preve!
But, hertè mine! what al this is to ſaine
Shal well be told, ſo that ye nought you greve,
Though I to you right on your ſelf complaine,
For therewith mene I finally the paine
That halt your hert and mine in hevineſſe
Fully to ſlaine, and every wrong redreſſe.

My gode hert mine! n'ot I for why ne how
That Jelouſy, alas! that wicked wivere,
Thus cauſèleſſe is cropin into you,
The harme of whiche I would fain delivere:
Alas! that he all whole or of him ſtivere
Should have his refute in ſo digne a place!
Than Jove him ſone out of your herte erace!

But o thou Jove! o auctour of nature!
Is this an honour to thy dignite
That folke ungilty ſuffrin here injure,
And who that gilty is al quite goeth he?
O were it lefull for to plaine of the,
That undeſervid ſuffriſt jelouſie,
Of that I would upon the plaine and crie.

Eke al my wo is this, that folke now uſen
To ſaine right thus; Ye, jelouſie is love,
And would a buſhil of venim excuſen,
For that a grane of love is on it ſhove,
But that wote high Jove that ſittin above
If it be likir love, or hate, or grame,
And aſtir that it ought to bere his name.

But certaine is some manir jelousie
Is excusable more than some iwis,
As whan cause is and some suche fantasie;
With pite that so wel expressid is
That it unnethis doeth or saith amis,
But godely drinkith up al his distresse;
And that excuse I for the gentilnesse.
And some so ful of fury'is and dispite
That it surmountith his repression;
But, hertè mine! ye be nat in that plite,
That thonke I God, for whiche your passion
I wol nat cal it but illusion
Of haboundaunce of love and besy cure,
That doth your hertè this disese endure;
Of which I am right sory but nat wrothe;
But for my devoir and your hert'is reste.
Where so you list, by ordal or by othe,
By sorte, or in what wise so that you leste,
For love of God let preve it for the beste,
And if that I be gilty do me die;
Alas! what might I more or done or seie?
And tho with that a fewe bright teris newe
Out of her eyin fel, and thus she seide;
Now God, thou wost in thought ne dede untrowe
To Troilus was nevir yet Creseide;
With that her hed doun in the bed she leide,
And with the shete it wrie, and sighid sore,
And held her pece; nat a word spake she more.
But now helpe God to quench al this sorow,
So hope I that he shal, for he beste may,
For *I have sene of a ful misty morow*
Folowen ful oft a mery somir's day,
And *Aftir wintir foloweth grene May;*
Men sene all day, and redin eke in stories,
That *Aftir sharpe stouris ben victories.*
This Troilus, when he her wordis herde,
Have ye no care him listè nat to slepe,
For it thought him no strokis of a yerde
To here or se Creseide his lady wepe,
But wel he felte about his hertè crepe,
For every tere whiche that Creseide asterte,
The crampe of deth to straine him by the herte.
And in his minde he gan the time accurse
That he came there, and that he was yborne,
For now his wicke ytournid into worse,
And all that labour he hath doen beforne
He wende it lost, he thought it n'as but lorne:
O Pandarus! thought he, alas! thy wile
Servith of nought, so welawaie the while!
And therwith all he hing adoune his hedde,
And fell on knees, and sorowfully sight:
What might he sain? he felt he n'as but dedde,
For wroth was she that should his sorowes light;
But nathèlesse whan that he spekin might,
Than said he thus; God wote that of this game
Whan all is wist than am I nat to blame.
Therwith the sorowe in hert so shet
That from his eyin fell there nat a tere,
And every spirite his vigour in knet,
So thei astonied and oppressid were;
The feling of his sorowe or his fere,
Or of aught ellis, fledde were out of toune;
Adoune he fell all sodainly in swoune,
This was no little sorowe for to se;
But all was hush't, and Pandare up as fast;
O necè! pece, or we be lost (quod he;)
Bethe nat agast; but certain at the last
For this or that he into bedde him cast,
And saide, O thefe! is this a mann'is herte?
And of he rent all to his barè sherte,
And sayid, Nece, but and ye helpe us now,
Alas! your ownè Troilus is lorne.
Iwis so would I, and I wistè how,
Full sain, (quod she,) Alas that I was borne!
Ye, necè, woll ye pullin out the thorne
That stiketh in his hertè (quod Pandare?)
Saie all foryeve, and stint is all this fare.
Ye, that to me (quod she) full levir were
Than all the gode the sunne about ygoeth;
And therewithall she swore him in his ere,
Iwis, my derè herte! I am not wrothe,
Have here my trouth; and many' an othir othe.
Now speke to me, for it am I Creseide:
But all for naught; yet might he not abreide.
Therwith his poulce and paumis of his hondes
Thei gan to frote; and wete his templis twain,
And to delivir him fro bittir bondes
She oft him kist; and, shortly for to sain,
Him to rewakin she did all her pain;
And at the last he gan his breth to drawe,
And of his swough sone aftir that adawe,
And gan bet minde and reson to him take;
But wondir sore he was abashed iwis,
And with a sigh whan he gan bet awake
He saied, O mercie, God! what thing is this?
Why doe ye with your selvin thus amis?
(Quod tho Creseide) is this a mann'is game?
What, Troilus! woll ye do thus for shame?
And therwithall her arme ovre' him she laide,
And all foryave, and oftin time him kest:
He thonkid her, and to her spake and saied
As fill to purpose for his hert'is rest;
And she to that answerde him as her lest,
And with her godelie wordis him disport
She gan, and oft his sorowes to comfort.
(Quod Pandarus) For aught I can aspien
This light nor I ne serving here of naught,
Light is nat gode for sikè folkis eyen;
But for the love of God, sens ye ben brought
In this gode plite, let now non hevy thought
Ben hangid in the hertis of you twey;
And bare the candle towardes the chimney.
Sone after this, though it no nede ywere,
Whan she soche othis as her list devise
Had of him takin, her thought tho no fere
Ne cause eke none to bid him thennis rise:
Yet lesse thing than othis maie suffice
In many' a case, for every wight I gesse
That lovith well menith but gentilnesse.
But in effect she would ywete anon
Of what man, and eke where, and also why,
He jelous was, sens there was causè non,
And eke the signe whiche that he toke it by,
She bade him that to tell her busily,
Or ellis certain she bare him on honde
That this was doen of malice, her to fonde;

Withoutin more, shortly for to sain,
He must obeie unto his ladie's hest,
And for the lasse harme he must somwhat sain;
He saied her, Whan she was at soche a fest
She might on him have lokid at the lest;
N'ot I nat what (all dere inough a rishe)
As he that nedis must a cause out fishe.

And she answerde, Swete hert! all were it so,
What harme was that, since I non evill mene?
For by that God that wrought us bothè two
In all manir thing is mine entent clene;
Soche argumentes ne be nat worthe a bene:
Woll ye the childish jelous counterfete?
Now were it worthy that ye were ibete.

Tho Troilus gan sorowfully sike,
Lest she be wrothe him thought his hertè deide,
And saied, Alas! upon my sorowe's sike
Have mercie, o swete hertè mine, Creseide!
And if that in tho wordis that I seide
Be any wrong, I woll no more trespace;
Doeth what you list; I am all in your grace.

And she answerde, Of gilt misericorde,
That is to saine, that I foryeve all this,
And evirmore on this night you recorde,
And bethe well ware ye doe no more amis.
Naie, dere hert mine! no more (quod he) iwis.
And now (quod she) that I have you doe smerte
Foryeve it to me, mine owne swetè herte!

This Troilus with blisse of that supprised
Put all in Godd'is hande, as he that ment
Nothing but well, and sodainly avised
He her in his armis fast to him hent;
And Pandarus with a full gode entent
Laied him to slepe, and saied, If ye be wise
Sownith not now, lest more folke arise.

What might or maie the sely larkè saie
When that the sparhauke hath him in his sote?
I can no more but of these ilkè twaie,
(To whom this tale sugre be or sote)
Though I tary a yere, somtime I mote
After mine authour tellin ther gladnesse,
As well as I have tolde ther bevinesse.

Creseide, whiche that felt her thus itake,
(As writin clerkis in ther bokis old)
Right as an aspin lefe she gan to quake
Whan she him felt her in his armis fold;
But Troilus all whole of caris cold
Gan thankin tho the blisfull goddis seven.
Thus *Sondry painis bringin folk to heven.*

This Troilus in armis gan her straine,
And saied, Swete! as evir mote I gone
Now be ye caught; now here is but we twaine;
Now yeldith you, for othir bote is none.
To that Creseide answerid thus anone,
Ne had I er now, my swete hertè dere!
Ben yoldin, iwis I were now not here.

O soth is saied, that helid for to be
Of a fevir or othir grete sikness
Men must drinkin, as we may oftin se,
Full bittir drinke, and for to have gladness
Men drinkin oft in pain and in distresse;
I mene it here, as for this avinture,
That through a pain hath foundin al his cure.

And now swetness ysemith ferre more swete
That bittirness assayid was biforne,
For out of wo in blisse now thei flete;
Non soche thei feltin sithins thei were borne;
Now is this bettir than bothe two be lorne:
For love of God take every woman hede
To werkin thus if it come to the nede.

Creseide all quite from every drede and tene,
As she that justè cause had him to trist,
Made him soche fest it joie was for to sene,
Whan she his trouth and clene entent ywist;
And as about a tre with many a twist
Bitrent and writhin is the swete wodbinde
Gan eche of 'hem in armis othir winde.

And as the newe abashid nightingale,
That stintith first, whan she beginnith sing,
Whan that she herith any herd's tale,
Or in the hedgis any wight stering,
And atir sikir doeth her voice out ring,
Right so Creseide, whan that her drede stent,
Opened her hert, and told him her entent.

And right as he that seeth his deth ishapen,
And dyin mote, in aught that he maie gesse,
And sodainly rescous doeth him escapen,
And from his deth is brought in sikirnesse,
For al this worlde in soche present gladnesse
Was Troilus and hath his lady swete;
With no worse hap God let us nevir mete!

Her armis small, her back both streight and soft,
Her sidis long, and fleshy, smothe, and white,
He gan to stroke, and gode thrift bad full oft,
Her snow-white throte, her brestis round and lite;
Thus in this heven' he gan him to delite,
And therwithall a thousande times her kist,
That what to doen for joie unneth he wist.

Than saied he thus, O Love! o Charite!
Thy mothir eke, Citherea the swete!
Aftir thy self next heryid be she,
Venus I mene, the wellwilly planete,
And next that Hymenæus! I the grete,
For nevir man was to you goddis hold
As I, whiche ye have brought fro caris cold.

Benigne Love! thou holy bond of thinges,
Who so woll grace, and list the not honoure,
Lo! his desire woll flie withoutin winges,
For n'oldist thou of bountie 'hem socoure
That servin best, and moste alwaie laboure,
Yet were all lost, that dare I well sain certes,
But if thy grace ypassid our desertes.

And for thou me, that lest thonke coud deserve
Of them that nombred ben unto thy grace,
Hast holpin there I likely was to sterve,
And me bestowid in so high a place
That thilkè boundis maie no blisse surpace,
I can no more, but laude and reverence
Be to thy bounte and thine excellence.

And therwithall Creseide anon he kist,
Of whiche certain she ne felt no disese,
And thus saied he, Now wold to God I wist,
Mine hertè swete! how I you best might plese.
What man (quod he) was evir thus at ese
As I, on whiche the fairist and the best
That er I seie deinith her hert to rest?

Here maie ye ſene that mercie paſſith right,
The' experience of that is felt in me,
That am unworthy to ſo ſwete a wight;
But harte mine! of your benignite
So thinkith, that though I unworthy be
Yet mote I nede amendin in ſome wiſe
Right through the vertue of your hie ſervice.
And for the love of God, my lady dere!
Sith he hath wrought me for I ſhal you ſerve,
As thus I mene, that ye woll be my fere
To do me live, if that you liſt, or ſterve;
So techith me how that I maie deſerve
Your thonke, ſo that I through min ignorannce
Ne doe nothing that you be diſpleſaunce:
For certis, freſhe and womanliche wife!
This dare I ſaie, that trouth and diligence,
That ſhall ye findin in me all my life,
Ne I woll not certain breke your defence,
And if I doe, preſent or in abſence,
For love of God let ſlea me with the dede,
If that it like unto your womanhede.
Iwis, (quod ſhe) mine owne herte'is luſt!
My ground of eſe, and al mine hertè dere!
Graunt mercie! for on that is all my truſt:
But let us fall awaie fro this mattere,
For it ſuffiſith this that ſaid is here,
And at o worde, withoutin repentaunce,
Welcome my knight, my pece, my ſuffiſaunce!
Of ther delite or joies one of the leſt
Were impoſſible to my wit to ſaie,
But judgith ye that have ben at the feſt
Of ſoche gladneſſe, if that him liſt to plaie,
I can no more but thus, theſe ilkè twaie
That night, betwixin drede and ſikirneſſe,
Feltin in love the gretiſt worthineſſe.
O blisfull night! of them ſo long iſought,
How blithe unto 'hem bothè two thou were!
Why ne' had I ſoche feſt with my ſoule ibought,
Ye, or but the leſt joie which that was there?
Awaie thou ſoulè daungir and thou fere!
And let 'hem in this hevin bliſſe ydwell,
That is ſo high that all ne can I tell.
But ſothe is, though I can not tellin all,
As can mine authour of his excellence,
Yet have I ſaied, and God toforne ſhall,
In every thing all wholly his ſentence,
And if that I at Lov'is reverence
Have any worde in echid for the beſt,
Doeth therwithall right as your ſelvin leſt;
For all my wordis here, and every part,
I ſpeke 'hem all undir correction
Of you that feling have in lov'is art,
And put it all in your diſcrecion,
To encreſe or make diminicion
Of my langage, and that I you beſeche:
But now to purpoſe of my rathir ſpeche.
Theſe ilkè two, that ben in armis laſt,
So lothe to 'hem aſondir gon it were,
That eche from othir wendin ben biraſt,
Or ellis, lo! this was ther moſtè fere,
That al this thing but nicè dremis were,
For whiche full oft eche of 'hem ſaid, O ſwete!
Clippe I you thus, or els doe I it mete?

And, Lorde! ſo he gan godelie on her ſe,
That nevir his loke ne blent from her face,
And ſaied, O my dere hertè! maie it be
That it be ſothe that ye ben in this place?
Ye, hertè mine! God thanke I of his grace,
(Quod tho Creſeide) and therwithall him kiſt,
That where here ſpirite was for joie ſhe n'iſt.
This Troilus full oft her eyin two
Gan for to kiſſe, and ſaied, O eyin clere!
It werin ye that wrought me ſochè wo,
Ye humble nettis of my lady dere,
Though there be mercie writtin in your chere,
God wote the text full harde is for to finde;
How couldin ye withoutin bonde me binde?
Therwith he gan her faſt in armis take,
And well an hundrid timis gan he ſike,
Not ſoche ſorowfull ſighis as men make
For wo, or ellis whan that folke be ſike,
But eſie ſighis, ſoche as ben to like,
That ſhewid his affection within;
Of ſoche manir ſighis could he not blin.
Sone aftir this thei ſpake of ſondrie thinges,
As fill to purpoſe of this avisture,
And playin enterchaungidin ther ringes,
Of whiche I can not tellin no ſcripture,
But well wot a broche of gold and azure,
In whiche a rubie ſet was like an hert,
Creſeide him yave, and ſtacke it on his ſherte.
Lorde! trowè ye that a coveitous wretche
That blamith love, and halte of it diſpite,
That of tho pens that he can muckre' and ketche
Was evir yet yeve to him ſochè delite,
As is in love in o poinct in ſome plite?
Naie, doubtleſſe, for all ſo God me ſave
So parfite joie ne maie no nigard have.
Thei woll ſaie Yes, but Lorde that ſo thei lie!
Tho buſie wretchis full of wo and drede
That callin love a wodeneſſe or folis;
But it ſhall fall 'hem as I ſhall you rede,
Thei ſhall forgon the white and eke the rede,
And live in wo, there God yeve 'hem miſchaunce,
And every lovir in his trouthe avaunce.
As would to God tho wretchis that diſpiſe
Service of love had eris all ſo long
As had Midas, all full of covetiſe,
And therto dronkin had as hotte and ſtrong
As Cyrus did for his affectis wrong,
To techin 'hem that thei ben in the vice,
And lovirs not, although thei hold 'hem nice.
Theſe ilkè two of whom that I you ſaie,
Whan that ther hertis well aſſurid were,
Tho gonnin thei to ſpekin and to plaie,
And eke rehercin how, and whan, and where,
Thei knewin firſt, and every wo or fere
That paſſid was; but all ſoche hevineſſe,
Ithonkid God, was tournid to gladneſſe.
And evirmore whan that 'hem fell to ſpeke
Of any thing of ſoche a time agone
With kiſſing all that talè ſhould ybreke,
And fallin into a newe joie anone,
And diddin all ther might, ſens thei were one,
For to recoveren bliſſe and ben at eſe,
And paiſid wo with joyis counterpaiſe.

Reſon woll not that I ſpekin of ſlepe,
For it accordith not to my mattere;
God wote thei toke of it full little kepe,
But left this night that was to 'hem ſo dere
Ne ſhould in vaine eſcape in no manere
It was biſet in joie and buſineſſe
Of all that founith into gentilneſſe.

But whan the cocke, commune aſtrologer,
Gan on his breſt to bete and aftir crowe,
And Lucifer, the day'is meſſanger,
Gan for to riſe, and out his bemis throwe,
And eſtward roſe, to him that could it know,
Fortuna Major, than anone Creſeide
With herte ſore to Troilus thus ſeide:

Mine hert'is life, my truſt, al my pleſaunce!
That I was borne, alas! that me is wo,
That daie of us mote make diſceveraunce,
For time it is to riſe and hennis go,
Or ellis I am loſt for evirmo.
O Night! alas! why n'ilt thou ore us hove
As long as whan Alcmena laie by Jove?

O blacke Night! as folke in bokis rede,
That ſhapin art by God this worlde to hide
At certain timis with thy derke wede,
That undir that men might in reſt abide,
Wel oughtin beſtes to plain and folke to chide,
That thereas daie with labor would us breſt,
That thou us ſlieſt and deinſt us not reſt.

Thou doeſt, alas! ſo ſhortly thine office,
Thou rakle Night, that God makir of kinde
The for thine haſt, and thine unkinde vice
So faſt aie to our hemiſpherè binde,
That nevirmore undir the ground thou winde,
For through thy rakle hying out of Troie
Have I forgone thus haſtily my joie.

This Troilus, that with tho wordis ſelt,
As thought him tho, for piteous diſtreſſe
The blodie teris from his hertè melt,
As he that yet nevir ſoche hevineſſe
Aſſayid had out of ſo grete gladneſſe,
Gan therewithall Creſeide his lady dere
In armis ſtrain, and ſaid in this manere:

O cruill Daie! accuſer of the joie
That Night and Love hath ſtole and faſt iwrie,
Accurſid be thy comming into Troie!
For every bowre hath one of thy bright eyen;
Envious Daie! what lift the ſo to ſpien?
What haſt thou loſt? why ſekiſt thou this place?
There God thy light ſo quenchè for his grace!

Alas! what have theſe lovirs the agilt?
Diſpitous Daie! thine be the paine of hell,
For many a lovir haſt thou ſlain and wilt;
Thy poring in woll no where let 'hem dwell:
What! proſtrift thou thy light here for to ſel?
Go, ſell it them that ſmalè ſelis grave;
We woll the not; us nedith no daie have.

And eke the ſonnè Titan gan he chide,
And ſaid, O ſole! well maie men the diſpiſe,
That haſt all night the Dauning by thy ſide,
And ſuffriſt her ſo ſone up fro the riſe,
For to diſeſe us lovirs in this wiſe;
What! hold your bed there thou and thy Morow;
I biddè God ſo yeve you both ſorowe.

Therwith full ſore he ſighed, and thus he ſeide:
My lady bright, and of my wele or wo
The well and rote! o godely mine, Creſeide!
And ſhall I riſe, alas! and ſhall I goe?
Now ſele I that mine hertè mote a two;
And how ſhould I my life an houre ſave
Sens that with you is all the life I have?

What ſhall I doen? for certis I n'ot how,
Ne whan, alas! I ſhal the time ſe
That in this plite I maie ben eft with you,
And of my life God wote how ſhall that be,
Sens that deſire right now ſo bitith me
That I am dede anon but I retourne:
How ſhould I long, alas! fro you ſojourne?

But nathèleſſe, mine ownè ladie bright!
Yet were it ſo that I wiſt uttirly
That I your humble ſervaunt and your knight
Were in your herte iſet ſo fermily
As ye in mine, the whiche thing truily
Me levir were than have theſe worldis twain,
Yet ſhould I bet endurin all my pain.

To that Creſeide anſwerid right anon,
And with a ſigh ſhe ſaied, O herte dere!
The game iwis ſo ferforth now is gon
That firſt ſhall Phœbus fallin from the ſphere,
And everiche egle ben the dov'is fere,
And every rocke out of his place aſterte,
Er Troilus go out of Creſeide's herte.

Ye ben ſo depe within mine herte ygrave,
That tho I would it turne out of my thought,
As wiſely wery God my ſoulè ſave,
To dyin in the pain I couldè nought;
And for the love of God, that us hath wrought,
Let in your brain none othir fantaſie
So crepin, that it cauſè me to die.

And that ye me would have as faſt in minde
As I have you, that would I you beſeche,
And if I wiſt ſothily that to finde,
God might not o point of my joyis eche.
But, hertè mine! withoutin morè ſpeche,
Bethe to me true, or ellis were it routhe.
For I am thine, by God and by my trouthe.

Bethe glad forthy, and live in ſikirneſſe,
Thus ſaied I ner er this, ne ſhall to mo;
And if to you it were a grete gladneſſe
To tourne ayen ſone aftir that ye go,
As faine would I as ye that it were ſo,
As wiſely God mine hertè bring to reſte,
And him in armis toke, and oftè keſte.

Ayenſt his will, ſithe it mote nedis be,
This Troilus up roſe, and faſt him cled,
And in his armis toke his lady fre
An hundrid times, and on his waie him ſped,
And with ſoche wordis as his herte ybled
He ſeidè, Farith wel, my dere herte ſwete!
That God us graunte ſound and ſone to mete.

To whiche no worde for ſorowe ſhe anſwerd,
So ſore gan his parting her to diſtrain,
And Troilus unto his paleis ferd,
As wo bigon as ſhe was, ſothe to ſaine,
So harde him wrong of ſharpe deſire the pain;
For to ben efte there he was in pleſaunce,
That it may nere out of his remembraunce.

Retourneid to his roiall palcis ſone
He ſoft unto his bedde gan for to ſhrinke,
To ſlepè long, as he was wont to doen;
But all for naught; he maie wel ligge and winke,
But ſlepe maie there none in his hertè ſinke,
Thinking how ſhe, for whom deſire him brende,
A M. folde was worth more than he wende.

And in his thought gan up and doune to wende
Her wordis all, and every continaunce,
And fermily impreſſin in his minde
The leſtè poincte that to him was pleſaunce,
And verily of thilkè remembraunce
Deſire al newe him brende, and luſt to brede
Gan more than erſt, and yet toke he non hede.

Creſeide alſo right in the ſamè wiſe
Of Troilus gan in her hertè ſhet,
His worthineſſe, his luſt, his dedis wiſe,
His gentilneſſe, and how ſhe with him met,
Thonking Love that he ſo well her beſet,
Deſiring oft to have her hertè dere
In ſoche a place as ſhe durſt make him chere.

Pandare a morowe which that commin was
Unto his necè gan her faire to grete,
And ſaied, All this night ſo rained it alas!
That all my drede is that ye, necè ſwete!
Have little leiſir had to ſlepe and mete:
All night (quod he) hath rain ſo do me wake
That ſome of us I trowe ther heddis ake.

And nere he came, and ſaid, How ſtant it now,
This merie morowe? nece, how can ye fare?
Creſeide anſwerde, Nevir the bet for you,
Foxe that ye ben, God yeve your hertè care;
God helpe me ſo ye cauſid all this fare,
Trowe I, (quod ſhe) for all your wordis white;
O who ſo ſeeth you knowith you full lite!

With that ſhe began her face for to wrie
With the ſhetè, and woxe for ſhame all redde,
And Pandarus gan undir for to prie,
And ſayid, Nece, if that I ſhall ben dedde
Have here a ſwerde and ſmitith of my hedde;
With that his arme all ſodainly he thriſte
Undir her necke, and at the laſt her kiſte.

I paſſe al that, which chargith naught to ſay:
What! God foryave his deth, and ſhe alſo
Foryave; and with her uncle gan to plaie,
For othir cauſe ne was there none than ſo:
But of this thing right to th' effect to go,
Whan time ywas home to her houſe ſhe went,
And Pandarus hath fully his entent.

Now tourne we ayen to Troilus,
That reſtèleſſe full longa bedde ylaie,
And privily ſent aſtir Pandarus,
To him to come in all the haſt he maie:
He come anon, not onis ſaied he naie,
And Troilus full ſobirly he grete,
And doune upon the bedd'is ſide him ſete.

This Troilus with all th' affectioun
Of frendly love that hertè maie deviſe
To Pandarus on kneis fill adoune,
And er that he would of the place ariſe
He gan him thankin on his beſtè wiſe;
An hundrid time he gan the timè bleſſe
That he was borne, to bring him fro diſtreſſe.

He ſaid, O frend of frendes! the aldirbeſt
That evir was, the ſothe for to tell,
Thou haſt in heven ibrought my ſoule at reſt
Fro Plegethon, the firie ſlode of hell,
That though I might a thouſande timis ſel
Upon a daie my liſe in thy ſervice,
It ne might not a mote in that ſuffice.

The ſonnè, whiche that al the worlde maie ſe,
Sawe nevir yet (my liſe that dare I leie)
So joily, faire, and godely, as is ſhe
Whoſe I am all, and ſhall till that I deie;
And that I thus am her's, dare I wel ſeie,
That thankid be the highè worthineſſe
Of Love, and eke thy kindè buſineſſe.

Thus haſt thou me no little thing iyeve;
For why? to the obligid be for aie
My life; and why? for through thine helpe I live,
Or els dedde had I ben many a daie:
And with that worde doun in his bed he laie,
And Pandarus full ſobirly him herde
Till all was ſaid, and than he him anſwerde:

My derè frende! if I have doen for the
In any caſe, God wote it is me leſe,
And am as glad as man maie of it be,
God helpe me ſo; but take now not agreſe
That I ſhall ſaine; beware of this miſchefe,
That there as now thou brought art to thy bliſſe
That thou thy ſelf ne cauſe it not to miſſe:

For of Fortun'is ſharpe adverſite
The worſtè kinde of infortune is this,
A man to have ben in proſperite,
And it remembir whan it paſſid is;
Thou' art wiſe inough, forthy doe nat amis;
But not to rakill though thou ſittè warme,
For if thou be certain it woll the harme.

Thou art at eſe, and hold the well therin,
For all ſo ſure as redde is every fire
At grete a craſte is to kepe well as winne:
Bridle alwaie thy ſpeech and thy deſire,
For *Worldly joie holdeth not but by a wire,*
That previth well, it breſt al daie ſo ofte,
Forthy nede is to werkin with it ſofte.

(Quod Troilus) I hope, and God toforne,
My derè frende! that I ſhall ſo me bere
That in my gilt there ſhall nothing ben lorne,
Ne I n'ill rakle for to grevin her;
It nedeth not this mattir oft to tere,
For wiſtiſt thou mine hertè wel, Pandare,
God wote of this thou wouldiſt litil care.

Tho gan he tell him of his gladè night,
And whereof firſt his hert ydradde and how,
And ſayid, Frende, as I am a true knight,
And by that faithe I owe to God and you,
I had it nevir half ſo hot as now,
And evir the more that deſire me biteth
To love her beſt the more it me deliteth.

I n'ot my ſelf not wiſely what it is,
But now I felin a new qualite,
Ye, all anothir than I did er this,
Pandare anſwerid and ſaied thus, that he
That onis maie in hevin bliſſe ybe
He felith othir wayis, dare I ſaie,
Than thilkè time be firſt herd of it faie.

This is a worde for al, that Troilus
Was nevir ful to ſpeke of this matere,
And for to praiſin unto Pandarus
The bounte of his bright lady ſo dere,
And Pandarus to thanke and makin chere;
This tale was aie ſpan newe to beginne
Till that the night departid 'hem atwinne.

Sone aftir this, for that Fortune it would,
Icomin was the bliſsful time ſwete
That Troilus was warnid that he ſhould
There he was erſt Creſeide his lady mete,
For whiche he felte his herte in joiè flete,
And faithfully gan all the goddis hery;
And let ſe now if that he can be mery.

And holdin was the forme and al the giſe
Of her comming, and eke of his alſo,
As it was erſt, whiche nedith nought deviſe;
But plainly to th' effecte right for to go,
In joie and ſurete Pandarus 'hem two
A bedde ybrought whan that 'hem bothè leſt,
And thus thei ben in quiete and in reſt.

Naught nedith it to you, ſithe thei ben met,
To aſke at me if that thei blithe ywere?
For if it erſt was well tho was it bet
A thouſande folde, this nedith not enquere;
Ago was every ſorow' and every fere,
And bothe iwis thei had, and ſo thei wende,
As mochil joie as herte maie comprehende.

This n'is no litil thing of for to ſey,
This paſſith every wit for to deviſe,
For eche of 'hem gan othir's luſt obey;
Felicite, whiche that theſe clerkis wiſe
Commendin ſo, ne may not here ſuffiſe;
This joye ne maie not writtin be with inke;
This paſſith al that any hert maie thinke.

But cruil day, ſo welaway the ſtounde!
Gan for to' aproche, as thei by ſignis knewe,
For whiche 'hem thought thei felin deth'is wounde:
So wo was 'hem that chaungin gan ther hewe,
And day thei gonnin to diſpiſe al newe,
Calling it traitour, envious, and worſe,
And bittirly the day'is light thei corſe.

(Quod Troilus) Alas! now am I ware
That Pyrois, and tho ſwifte ſtedis thre
Whiche that ydrawin forth the Sunn'is chare
Han gon ſome bypathe in diſpite of me,
And makith it ſo ſone day to be,
And for the Sunne him haſtith thus to riſe
Ne ſhall I nevir don him ſacrifiſe.

But nedis daie departin 'hem muſt ſone;
And whan ther ſpechè don was and ther chere
Thei twin anon, as thei were wont to done,
And ſettin time of meting efte ifere,
And many' a night thei wrought in this manere:
And thus Fortune a time yladde in joie
Creſeide and eke this king'is ſon of Troie.

In ſuffiſaunce, in bliſſe, and in finginges,
This Troilus gan al his life to lede;
He ſpendith, juſtith, and makith feſtinges;
He gevith frely oſte, and chaungith wede;
He helde about him alwaie out of drede
A worlde of folke, as come him well of kinde,
The freſhiſt and the beſt that he could finde.

That ſuche a voice was of him and a ſteven
Throughout the world of honour and largeſſe
That it up ronge unto the yate of heven;
And as in love he was in ſuche gladneſſe
That in his hert he demid as I geſſe
That there n'is lovir in this world at eſe
So wel as he, and thus gan love him pleſe.

The godelihede or beaute whiche that Kinde
In any othir lady had iſette
Can not the mountenaunce of a gnat unbinde
About his hert of al Creſeid'is nette;
He was ſo narowe imaſkid and iknette
That is undon in any manir ſide
That n'il nat ben for aught that maie betide.

And by the honde ful oftin he would take
This Pindarus, and into gardin lede,
And ſuche a feſt and ſuche a proceſſe make
Him of Creſeide, and of her womanhede,
And of her beaute, that withoutin drede
It was an heven his wordis for to here,
And than he would ſing in this manere:

Love, that of erthe and ſe hath governaunce,
Love, that his heſtis hath in hevin hie,
Love, that with a right wholſome aliaunce
Halte peple joynid as him liſte 'hem gie,
Love, that yknittith lawe and companie,
And couplis doth in vertue for to dwel,
Binde this accorde that I have tolde and tel.

That that the world with faith, whiche that is ſtable,
Diverſith ſo his ſtoundis according,
That elementis that bethe diſcordable
Holdin a bonde perpetually during,
That Phœbus mote his roſy day forth bring,
And that the mone hath lordſhip ore the nightes,
Al this doeth Love; aie heried be his mightes!

That that the ſe, that gredy is to flowen,
Conſtrainith to a certaine ende ſo
His flodis, that ſo fierſly thei ne growen
To drenchin erthe and al for evirmo,
And if that Love aught let his bridil go
Al that now lovith afondir ſhould lepe,
And loſt were al that Love halt now to hepe.

So would to God, that author is of kinde,
That with his bonde Love of his vertue liſt
To ſerchin hertis al, and faſt to binde,
That from his bonde no wight the wey out wiſt,
And hertis colde them wold I that he twiſt
To make 'hem love, and that liſt him aie rewe
On hertis ſore, and kepe hem that ben trewe.

In allè nedis for the toun'is werre
He was, and aie the firſt in armis dight,
And certainly, but if that bokis erre,
Save Hector moſt idradde of any wight;
And this encreſe of hardineſſe and might
Come him of love, his ladies thanke to win,
That altirid his ſpirite ſo within.

In time of truce on hauking would he ride,
Or ellis hunt the bore, beare, or lioun,
The ſmalè beſtis let he gon beſide;
And whan that he come riding into' the toun
Ful oft his lady from her window doun,
As freſh as faucon comin out of mue,
Ful redy was him godely to ſalue.

And moſt of love and vertue was his ſpeche,
And in diſpite had he al wretchidneſſe;
And doutleſſe no nede was him to beſeche
To honourin them that had worthineſſe,
And eſin 'hem that werin in diſtreſſe;
And glad was he if any wight wel ferde
That lovir was whan he it wiſt or herde.

For, ſoth to ſaine, he loſt helde every wight
But if he were in Lov'is high ſervice,
I menè folke that aught it ben of right;
And ore al this ſo wel coulde he deviſe
Of ſentiment, and in ſo uncouthe wiſe
Al his array, that every lovir thought
That al was well what ſo he ſaid or wrought.

And though that he become of blode royal,
Him lift of pride at no wight for to chace;
Benigne he was to eche in general,
For which he gate him thanke in every place:
Thus wouldè Love, iheried be his grace!
That pride and ire, envie and avarice,
He gan to flie, and every othir vice.

Thou lady bright, the doughtir of Dione!
Thy blinde and wingid ſonne eke, Dan Cupide!
Ye Suſtrin Nine eke! that by Helicone
In hil Parnaſſo liſtin for to' abide,
That ye thus ferre han deinid me to gide
I can no more, but ſens that ye wol wende
Ye beried ben for aie withoutin ende!

Through you have I ſaid fully in my ſong
Th' effecte and joie of Troilus ſervice,
Al be that there was ſome diſeſe among,
As mine auctour to liſtith to deviſe:
My Thirdè Boke now ende I in this wiſe,
And Troilus in luſte and in quiete
Is with Creſeidè, his owne ladie ſwete.

TROILUS & CRESEIDE.

PROŒMIUM LIBRI QUARTI.

But all to litill, welaway the while!
Laſtith ſuche joie, ithonkid be Fortune,
That ſemith trewiſt whan ſhe woll begile,
And can to folis ſo her ſonge entune
That ſhe 'hem hent and blent, traitour commune,
And whan a wight is from her whele ithrowe
Than laughith ſhe, and makith him the mowe.

From Troilus ſhe gan her brightè face
Away to writhe, and toke of him non hede,
And caſte him clene out of his ladie's grace,
And on her whele ſhe ſet up Diomede,
For which min hert right now ginnith to blede;
And now my pen, alas! with which I write,
Quakith for drede of that I muſt endite;

For how Creſeidè Troilus forſoke,
Or at the left how that ſhe was unkinde,
Mote hennisforth ben matir of my Boke,
As writin folke through which it is in minde!
Alas! that thei ſhould evir cauſè finde
To ſpeke her harme! and if thei on her lie
Iwis them ſelfe ſhould have the vilanie.

O ye Erinnyes! Night'is doughtirs thre,
That endèleſſe complaine evir in paine,
Megæra, Alecto, and Tyſiphone,
Thou cruil Mars eke! fathir of Quirine,
This ilke Fourth Boke helpith me for to fine,
So that the loos of love and life iſere
Of Troilus be fully ſhewid here.

INCIPIT LIBER QUARTUS.

Lyeoing in hoſt, as I have ſaide er this,
The Grekis ſtrong aboutin Troiè toune,
Bifell that whan that Phœbus ſhining is
Upon the breſte of Hercules Lioun
That Hector with many a bold boroun
Caſt on a daie with Grekis for to fight,
As he was wont, to greve 'hem what he might.

N'ot I how long or ſhort it was bitwene
This purpoſe and that day thei fightin mente;
But on a daie wel armid bright and ſhene
Hector and many' a worthy knight out wente
With ſpere in honde, and with bigge bowis bente,
And in the berde, withoutin lengir lette,
Ther fomen in the felde anon 'hem mette.

The longè day with ſperis ſharpe igrounde,
With arowes, dartis, ſwerdes, and macis fel,
Thei fight, and bringin horſe and man to grounde,
And with ther axis out the brainis quel;
But in the laſt ſhoure, the ſothe for to tel,
The folke of Troie 'hem ſelvin ſo miſleden
That with the worſe at night homeward thei fleden.

At whichè day was takin Antenor,
Polydamas, and alſo Meneſtes,
Xantippe, Sarpedon, Polyſtenor,
Polite, or the Trojan, Dan Ruphes,
And othir leſſè folk, as Phebuſes,
So that for harme that daie the folke of Troie
Dredin to leſe a grete parte of ther joie.

Of Priamus was yeve, at Grekes requeſt,
A time of truce, and tho thei gonnin trete
Ther priſoners to chaungin moſt and leſt,
And for the ſurplus yevin ſommis grete;
This thing anon was couthe in every ſtrete,
Bothe in th' aſſege, in toun, and every where,
And with the firſt it came to Calchas ere.

When Calchas knew this tretiſe ſhould yholde,
In conſiſtorie' amonge the Grekis ſone,
He gan in thringe forthe with the lordis olde,
And ſet him there as he was wont to done,
And with a chaungid face 'hem bade a bone,
For love of God, to done that reverence
To ſtintin noiſe, and yeve him audience.

Than ſaid he thus, Lo! Lordis mine, I was
Troyan, as it is knowin out of drede,
And if that you remembre' I am Calchas,
That aldirfirſt yave comfort to your nede,
And toldè wel howe that you ſhildin ſpede,
For dredèleſſe through you ſhal in a ſtounde
Ben Troie ibrent, and betin doun to grounde.

And in what forme or in what manir wiſe
This toun to ſhende, and al your luſt atcheve,
Ye have er this wel herde me you deviſe;
This knowin ye, my Lordis, as I leve,
And for the Grekis werin me ſo leve,
I came my ſelfe in my propir perſone
To teche in this how you was beſt to done.

Having unto my treſour ne my rent
Right no regarde in reſpecte of your eſe,
Thus al my gode I lefte and to you went,
Wening in this you, Lordis, for to pleſe;
But al that loſſe ne doth me no diſeſe;
I vouchſafe do, as wiſely have I joi,
For you to leſe al that I have in Troie,

Save of a doughtir that I lefte, alas!
Sleping at home when out of Troie I ſtert;
O ſterne, o cruil fathir that I was!
Howe might I have in that ſo hard an hert?
Alas that I ne' had brought her my ſhert!
For ſorow' of which I wol nat live to morow,
But if ye, Lordis, rewe upon my ſorow.

For bicauſe that I ſawe no time er now
Her to delivre' I holdin have my pees,
But now or nevir, if that it like you,
I may her have right ſone nowe doubtleſs;
O helpe and grace amongis al this preſs!
Rewe on this oldè caitiſe in diſtreſſe,
Sith I through you have all this hevineſſe.

Ye have now caught and fettrid in priſon
Troyans inowe, and if your willis be
My childe with one may have redemption;
Now for the love of God and of bounte
One of ſo fele, alas! ſo yefe him me;
What nede were it this prayir for to werne,
Sith ye ſhul have both folke and toun as yarn?

On peril of my life I ſhal nat lie,
Apollo hath me tolde ful faithfully;
I have eke foundin by aſtronomy,
By ſort, and eke by augury, trewely,
And dare wel ſaie the time is faſtè by
That fire and flambe on al the toun ſhal ſprede,
And thus ſhal Troie yturne to aſhin dede.

For certaine Phœbus and Neptunus bothe,
That makidin the wallis of the toun,
Ben with the folke of Troie alwaie ſo wroth

That thei wol bring it to confusioun;
Right in dispite of King Laomedoun,
Bicause he n'olde payin 'hem ther hire,
The toun of Troiè shal ben set on fire.
Telling his tale alway this oldè grey,
Humble in speche and in his loking eke,
The saltè terris from his eyin twey
Ful fast yronnin doun by eithir cheke;
So long he gan of socour 'hem beseke
That for to hele him of his sorowes sore
Thei gave him Antenor withoutin more.
But who was glad inough but Calchas tho?
And of this thing ful sone his nedis leide
On them that shouldin for the tretise go,
And them for Antenor ful oftè preide
To bringin home King Thoas and Creseide;
And whan Priam his safe conduct sent,
Th' embassadours to Troie streight they went.
The cause i-tolde of ther comming, the olde
Priam the King ful sone in generall
Gan hereupon his parliment to holde,
Of whiche th' effecte rehercin you I shall:
Th' embassadours ben answerde for finall
The eschaunge of prisoners and al this nede
'Hem likith wel, and forth in thei procede.
This Troilus was present in the place
Whan askid was for Antenor Creseide,
For whiche ful sone to chaungin gan his face,
As he that with tho wordis wel nigh deide;
But nathèlesse he no worde to it seide,
Lest men should his affection espie;
With mann'is hert he gan his sorowes drie.
And ful of anguish and of gresly drede
Abode what othir lordes would to it sey,
And if that thei would graunt, as God forbede!
Th' eschaunge of her; then thought he thinges
First how to save her honor, and what wey [twey
He mightè best th' eschaunge of her withstonde;
Ful fast he cast how allè this might stonde.
Love him made allè prest to done her bide,
And rathir dyin than that she should go,
But Reason said him on that othir side
Withoutin assent of her do nat so,
Lest for thy werkè she would be thy foe,
And sain, that through thy meddling is iblowe
Your bothè love ther it was erst not knowe.
For whiche he gan deliberen for the beste,
And though the lordis wouldin that she went
He wouldè soffir them graunt what 'hem lest,
And tel his lady first what that thei ment;
And, when that she had said him her entent,
Therafter would he werkin all so blive
Tho al the world ayen it would ystrive.
Hector with that full wel the Grekis herde
For Antenor how thei would have Creseide,
Gan it withstonde, and sobirly answerde;
Sirs, she ne is no prisoner (he seide;)
I n'ot 'en you who that this chargè leide,
But on my parte ye maie eftsones 'hem tell
We usin here no women for to sell.
The noise of peple upstert then atones
As brimme as blase of strawe iset on fire,
For infortune it wouldè for the nones
Thei shouldin ther confusion desire.
Hector, (quod thei) what gost may yon enspire
This woman thus to shilde, and done us lese
Dan Antenor? a wrong waie now ye chese
That is so wise, and eke so bolde baroun,
And we have nede of folke, as men may se;
He is one of the gretist of this toun:
O Hector! lette suche thy fantasies be;
O King Priam! (quod thei) thus seggè we,
That all our voice is to forgone Creseide,
And to delivir Antenor thei preide.
O Juvenal, Lorde! trewe is thy sentence,
That litil wenin folke what is to yerne,
That thei ne findin' in ther desire offence,
For cloude of errour ne lette 'hem discerne
What best is; and lo! here ensample' as yerne;
These folke desirin now deliveraunce
Of Antenor, that brought 'hem to mischaunce:
For he was aftir traitour to the toune
Of Troy, alas! thei quitte him out to rathe:
O nicè world, lo thy discrecion!
Creseidè, which that nevir did 'hem scathe,
Shal nowe no lengir in her blisse bathe,
But Antenor he shal come home to toune,
And she shal out: thus said both heere and houne.
For which delibered was by parliment
For Antenor to yeldin out Creseide,
And it pronouncid by the President,
Although that Hector nay ful oftè praide;
And finally, what wight that it withsaide
It was for naught; it must yben and should,
For substaunce of the parliment it would.
Departid out o' th' parliment echone,
This Troilus, withoutin wordis mo,
Unto his chambre spedde him fast alone,
But if it were a man of his or two,
The whiche he bad out fastè for to go,
Bicause that he would slepin, as he saide,
And hastily upon his bedde him laide.
And as in wintir levis ben birafte
Eche aftir othir til the trees be bare,
So that there n'is but barke and braunche ilafte,
Lithe Troilus biraft of eche welfare,
Iboundin in the blackè barke of care,
Disposid wode out of his witte to breide,
So sore him sate the chaunging of Creseide.
He rist him up and every dore he shette
And window eke, and tho this wofull man
Upon his bedd'is side adoune him sette,
Ful like a ded image, both pale and wan,
And in his brest the hepid wo began
Out brust, and he to workin in this wise,
In his wodenesse, as I shal you devise.
Right as the wildè bulle beginnith spring
Now here now there, idartid to the herte,
And of his deth rorith in complaining,
Right so gan he about the chambre sterte,
Smiting his brest aie with his fistis smerte;
His hed to the' wall, his body to the grounde,
Ful ofte he swapte, him selvin to confounde.
His eyin two for pite of his herte
Out stremidin as swifte as wellis twey;
The highè sobbis of his sorowes smerte

His ſpeche him reſte; unnethis might he ſey
O Deth, alas! why n'ilt thou do me dey?
Acurſid be that day which that Nature
Yſhope me to ben a liv'is creture!
But aftir, whan the fury' and al the rage
Whiche that his hertè twiſt and faſtè threſt
By length of timè ſomewhat gan aſwage,
Upon his bedde he laide him doun to reſt;
But thò begon his teres more out to breſt,
That wondir is the body maie ſuffiſe
To halſe this wo which that I you deviſe.
Than ſaide he thus; Fortune, alas the while!
What have I done? what have I the agilt?
How mightiſt thou for routhe thus me begile?
Is there no grace? and ſhal I thus be ſpilt?
Shal thus Creſeide away for that thou wilt?
Alas! how mightiſt thou in thine hert finde
To ben to me thus cruil and unkinde?
Have I the nat honourid al my live,
As thou well woteſt, above the goddis all?
Why wilt thou then of this joie me deprive?
O Troilus! what may men now the call
But wretche of wretchis, out of honour fal
Into miſe'ry? in whiche I wol bewaile
Creſeide, alas! til that the brethe me faile.
Alas, Fortune! if that my life in joie
Diſpleſid had unto thy foule envie,
Why ne' haddiſt thou my fathir King of Troy
Birafte the life, or done my brethrin die,
Or ſlaine my ſelfe, that thus complaine and crie?
I combre world that maie of nothing ſerve,
But evir die and never fully ſterve.
If that Creſeide alone werin me lafte
Naught raught I whidir thou woldiſt me ſtere,
And her, alas! than haſt thou me birafte:
But evirmore, lo! this is thy manere,
To reve a wight that moſte is to him dere,
To preve in that thy gierfull violence;
Thus am I loſt, there helpith no defence.
O very Lorde! o Love, o god! alas!
That knowiſt beſt min hert and al my thought,
What ſhal my ſoroufull life done in this caas
If I forgo that I ſo dere have bought?
Sens ye Creſeide and me have fully brought
Into your grace, and both our hertis ſeled,
How maie ye ſuffre', alas! it be repeled?
What I may done I ſhal, while I may dure
On live, in turment and in cruill paine;
This infortune and this diſavinture
Alone as I was borne I wol complaine,
Ne nevir wol I ſene it ſhine or raine,
But ende I wol as Edippe in derkneſſe
My wofull life, and dying in diſtreſſe.
O wery ghoſt! that erriſt to and fro,
Why n'ilt thou flien out of the wofulleſt
Body that evir might on grounde ygo?
O ſoulè! lurking in this woful neſte,
Flee forth anon, and do mine hèrte to breſte,
And folowe Creſeidè thy lady dere;
Thy right place is no lengir to ben here.
O woful eyin two! ſens your diſparte
Was al to ſene Creſeid's eyin bright,
What ſhal ye done, but for my diſcomforte
Stondin for naught and wepin out your ſight,
Sens ſhe is queint that wont was you to light?
In veine from this forth have I eyin twey
Iformid, ſens your vertue is awey.
O my Creſeide! o lady ſovèraine!
Of this forowfull ſoulè that thus crieth
Who ſhall now yevin comfort to thy paine?
Alas! no wight; but whan mine hert ydieth
My ſpirite, whiche that ſo unto you hieth,
Receve in gre, for that ſhall aie you ſerve;
Forthy no force is tho the body ſterve.
O ye lovirs! that high upon the whele
Ben ſette of Fortune, in gode avinture
God lene that ye aie findin love of ſtele,
And longè mote your life in joy endure,
But when ye comin by my ſepulture
Remembrith that your felowe reſtith there,
For I lovid eke, though I unworthy were.
O olde unwholſome and miſlivid man,
Calchas I mene! alas! what eilid the
To ben a Greke ſens thou art borne Trojan?
O Calchas! whiche that wolt my banè be,
In curſid timè was thou borne for me;
As wouldè bliſsfull Jovè for his joye
That I the had where that I would in Troie!
A thouſande ſighis hottir than the glede
Out of his breſt ethe aftir othir wente,
Medlid with plaintis newe, his wo to fede,
For whiche his woful teris nevir ſtente;
And, ſhortly, ſo his ſorowes him to rente,
He woxe ſo mate that ne joy nor penaunce
He felith none, but lyith in a traunce.
Pandarus, whiche that in the parliment
Had herde what every lord and burgeis ſeid,
And how ful grauntid was by one aſſent
For Antenor to yeldin out Creſeide,
Gan wel nigh wode out of his wit to breide,
So that for wo he ne wiſt what he mente,
But in a rage to Troilus he wente.
A certaine knight that for the timè kepte
The chambre dore undid it him anone,
And Pandarus, that ful tendirly wepte,
Into the derke chambre as ſtil as ſtone
Towarde the bedde gan ſoftly for to gone,
So confuſe that he ne wiſt what to ſay;
For very wo his witte was nigh away.
And with his chere and loking al to torne
For wo of this, and with his armis folden,
He ſtode this woful Troilus beforne,
And on his pitous face he gan beholden;
But Lord! ſo oftin gan his hert to colden,
Seying his frende in wo, whoſe hevineſſe
His hertè flough, as thought him, for diſtreſſe.
This woful wight, this Troilus, that felte
His frende Pandare icomin him to ſe,
Gan as the ſnow ayenſt the ſunne to melte,
For whiche this woful Pandare of pite
Gan for to wepe as tendirly as he;
And ſpechèleſſe thus ben theſe ilkè twey,
That neithir might for ſorow o worde ſey.
But at the laſt this wofull Troilus,
Nigh did for ſmert, gan breſtin out to rore,
And with a ſorowful noiſe he ſaid thus,

Amonges his ſobbis and his ſighis ſore;
Lo! Pandare, I am ded, withoutin more;
Haſt thou nat herde at parliment, he ſeide,
For Antenor how loſte is my Creſeide?
This Pandarus, ful ded and pale of hewe,
Ful pitouſly anſwerid, and ſaide Yea,
As wiſely were it falſe as it is trewe
That I have herde, and wote all how it is!
O mercy, God! who would have trowid this?
Who would have wende that in ſo lite a throw
Fortune our joye would havin overthrow?
For o! in this world there is no creture,
As to my dome, that evir ſawe ruine
Straungir then this through caſe or avinture;
But who may al eſchue or al devine?
Suche is this world. Forthy I thus define,
Ne truſtith no wight to finde in Fortune
Aie propertie; her yeftis ben commune.
But tel me this, why thou art now ſo mad,
To ſorowen thus why liſte thou in this wiſe,
Sens thy deſire al wholly haſt thou had,
So that by right it ought inough ſuffice?
But I, that nevir felte in my ſervice
A frendly chere or loking of an eye,
Let me thus wepe and wailin til I dye.
And ore al this, as thou wel woſt thy ſelve,
This toune is ful of ladies al aboute,
And to my dome fairir than ſuche twelve
As er ſhe was ſhall I finde in a route,
Ye, one or twey, withoutin any doute:
Forthy be glade, mine owne derè brother!
If ſhe be loſt we ſhal recovre' an other.
What! God forbid alway that eche pleſaunce
In o thing were, and in non othir wight;
If one can ſinge, anothir can wel daunce,
If this be godely ſhe is glad and light,
And this is faire and that can gode aright;
Eche for his vertue holdin is full dere
Bothe heroner and faucon for rivere.
And eke, as writ Zanſis, that was full wiſe,
The newè love out chaſith oft the old,
And upon newe caſe lyith newe aviſe;
Thinke eke thy ſelf to ſavin thou art hold;
Soche fire by proceſſe ſhall of kindè cold,
For ſens it is but caſuell pleſaunce,
Some caſe ſhal put it out of remembraunce.
For all ſo ſure as daie cometh aftir night
The newè love, labour, or othir wo,
Or ellis ſeldè ſeing of a wight,
Doen old affections all ovir go;
And for thy part thou ſhalt have one of tho
To abredge with thy bittir paines ſmerte;
Abſence of her ſhall drive her out of herte.
Theſe wordis ſaied, he for the nonis all
To helpe his frende, leſt he for ſorowe deide,
For doubteleſſe to doen his wo to fall
He ne raught nat what unthrift that he ſeide;
But Troilus, that nigh for ſorowe deide,
Toke little hede of all that ere he ment;
One ere it herd, at the' othir out it went.
But at the laſt he anſwerde, and ſaid, Frend,
This lechcraft, or yhelid thus to be,
Were well ſitting if that I were a fend,
To traiſin her that true is unto me;
I praie God let this counſail nevir the,
But doe me rathir ſterve anon right here
Er I thus doen as thou me wouldiſt lere.
She that I ſerve iwis, what ſo thou ſeie,
To whom mine herte enhabite is by right,
Shall have me wholly her's till that I deie;
For, Pandarus, ſens I have trouth her hight,
I woll nat ben untrue for any wight,
But as her man I woll aie live and ſterve,
And nevir wolle non othir cretture ſerve.
And there thou ſaieſt thou ſhalt as faire yfind
As ſhe, let be; make no comparíſon
To a creture iformid here by Kinde;
O leve, Pandarus! thy concluſion;
I woll nat ben of thine opinion
Touching all this, for whiche I the beſeche
So holde thy pece; thou ſlaeſt me with thy ſpeche.
Thou biddiſt me that I ſhould love another
All freſhly newe, and let Creſeidè go;
It lithe nat in my powir, levè brother,
And though I might yet would I nat doe ſo;
But canſt thou playin raket to and fro,
Nettle' in Docke out, now this now that, Pandare?
Now foulè fall her for thy wo that care!
Thou fariſt eke by me, thou Pandarus,
As he that whan a wight is wo bigon
He cometh to him apace and ſaith right thus,
Thinke not on ſmert and thou ſhalt fele none.
Thou maieſt me firſt tranſmewin in a ſtone,
And reve me of my paſſionis all,
Or thou ſo lightly do my wo to fall.
The deth maie well out of my breſt depart
The life, ſo long maie laſt this ſorowe mine,
But fro my ſoulè ſhall Creſeid'is dart
Out nevirmore, but doune with Proſerpine,
Whan I am dedde, I woll go won in pine,
And there I woll eternally complain
My wo, and how that twinnid be we twain.
Thou haſt here madè an argument full fine,
How that it ſhouldin laſſè pain ybe
Creſeidè to forgon, for ſhe was mine,
And lived in eſe and in felicite:
Why gabbiſt thou, that ſaidiſt erſt to me
That him is wors that is fro wele ithrowe
Than he had erſt none of that wele iknowe?
But tel me now, ſens that the thinketh ſo light
To chaungin ſo in love aie to and fro,
Why haſt thou nat doen buſily thy might
To chaungin her that doeth the al thy wo?
Why n'ilt thou let her fro thine herte go?
Why n'ilt thou love anothir lady ſwete,
That maie thine hertè ſettin in quiete?
If thou haſt had in love aie yet miſchaunce,
And canſt it not out of thine hertè drive,
I that have lived in luſt and in pleſaunce
With her, as mocle as any wight on live,
How ſhould I that foryet, and that ſo blive?
O! where haſt thou ben hid ſo long in mewe
That canſt ſo well and formèliche argewe?
Naie, Pandarus, naught worth is all thy rede,
But doutèleſs for ought that may befall,
Withoutin wordis mo, I woll ben dede.

O Deth! that endir art of ſorowes all,
Come now, ſens I ſo oft aſtir the call,
For ſely is that deth, ſoth for to ſain,
That oft iclepid cometh and endith pain.
Well wote I, while my life was in quiete,
Er thou me ſlue I would have yevin hire,
But now thy comming is to me ſo ſwete
That in this worlde I nothing ſo deſire:
O Deth! ſens with this ſorowe I' am afire,
Thou eithir doe me anon in teris dreache
Or with thy coldè ſtroke mine hertè quenche.
Sens that thou ſlaeſt ſo ſele in ſondry wiſe
Ayenſt ther will, unprayid, daie and night,
Doe me at my requeſtè this ſervice,
Deliver now the worlde, ſo doeſt thou right,
Of me, that am the ſorowfulliſt wight
That evir was, for time is that I ſterve
Sens in this world of right naught do I ſerve.
This Troilus in teris gan diſtill,
As licour out of a limbeck full faſt,
And Pandarus gan holde his tongè ſtill,
And to the ground his eyin doune he caſt,
But nathèleſſe thus thought he at the laſt;
What! parde rathir than my ſelowe deie
Yet ſhall I ſomwhat more unto him ſeie.
And ſayid, Frend, ſens thou haſt ſoche diſtreſſe,
And ſens the liſt mine argumentis blame,
Why n'ilt thou thy ſelvin helpe doen redreſſe,
And with thy manhode lettin all this game?
Go raviſhe her, ne canſt thou not for ſhame?
And eithir let her out of tounè fare
Or hold her ſtill, and leve thy nicè fare.
Art thou in Troie and haſt non hardiment
To take a woman whiche that lovith the,
And would her ſelvin ben of thine aſſent?
Now is nat this a nicè vanite?
Riſe up anon and let this weping be,
And kith thou art a man, for in this hour
I woll ben dedde or ſhe ſhall bein our.
To this anſwerde him Troilus full ſoſt,
And ſaied, Iwis, my leve brothir dere!
All this have I my ſelf yet thought full oft,
And more thingis than thou deviſiſt here,
But why this thing is laſt thou ſhalt well here,
And whan thou haſt me yevin audience
Theraftir maieſt thou tell all thy ſentence.
Firſt, ſin thou woſt this toun hath all this were
For raviſhing of women ſo by might,
It ſhould not ben yſuffrid me to erre,
As it ſtont now, ne doen ſo grete unright;
I ſhould have alſo blame of every wight
My fathir's graunt if that I ſo withſtode,
Sens ſhe is chaungid for the toun's gode.
I have eke thought, ſo it were her aſſent,
To aſke her of my fathir of his grace,
Than thinke I this were her accuſèment,
Sens well I wot I maie her not purchace;
For ſens my fathir in ſo high a place
As parliment hath her eſchaunge enſeled
He n'ill for me his lettir be repeled.
Yet drede I moſte her hertè to perturbe
With violence, if I doe ſoche a game,
For if I would it opinly diſturbe
It muſt be diſclaundre unto her name,
And me were levir die than her diffame,
As n'oldè God, but if that I ſhould have
Her honour levir than my life to ſave.
Thus am I loſt, for aught that I can ſe,
For certain is that ſith I am her knight
I muſt her honour levir have than me
In every caſe, as lovir ought of right:
Thus am I with deſire and reſon twight,
Deſire for to diſtourbin her me redeth,
And reſon n'ill not, ſo mine hertè dredeth.
Thus weping, that he ne could nevir ceſe,
He ſaid, Alas! how ſhall I wretchè fare?
For well felè I alwaie my love encreſe,
And hope is laſſe and laſſe alway, Pandare;
Encreſin eke the cauſis of my care;
So welawaie! why n'ill mine hertè breſt?
For why? in love there is but little reſt.
Pandare anſwerid, Frend, thou maieſt for me
Doen as the liſt, but had I it ſo hote,
And thine eſtate, ſhe ſhould ygo with me;
Tho all this toun cried on this thing by note,
I n'oldè ſet all that noiſe at a grote,
For whan men have well cried than woll thei roun
Eke wondir laſt but ix daies nere in toun.
Devinith not in reſon aie ſo depe,
Ne curtiſly, but helpe thy ſelf anon;
Bet is that othir than thy ſelvin wepe,
And namily ſens ye two ben all one:
Riſe up, for by mine hedde ſhe ſhall not gone,
And rathir ben in blame a little found
Than ſterve here as a gnat withoutin wound.
It is no ſhame unto you ne no vice
Her to witholdin that the lovith moſte:
Paravinture ſhe might holde the for nice
To lette her go thus to the Grekis hoſte:
Thinke eke *Fortune*, as well thy ſelvin woſte,
Helpith the hardie man to his empriſe,
And weivith wretchis for ther cowardiſe.
And though thy lady would alite her greve,
Thou ſhalt thy ſelf thy pece hereaftir make;
But as to me certain I can not leve
That ſhe would it as now for evill take,
Why ſhouldè than for fere thine hertè quake?
Thinke how that Paris hath, that is thy brother,
A love, and why ſhal thou not have another?
And, Troilus, o thing I dare the ſwere,
That if Creſeidè, whiche that is thy leſe,
Now lovith the as well as thou doeſt here,
God helpe me ſo, ſhe n'ill not take agreſe
Thoegh thou do bote anon in this miſcheſe;
And if ſhe wilnith fro the for to paſſe
Than is ſhe falſe, ſo love her well tho laſſe.
Forthy take hert, and thinke right as a knight,
Through love is brokin al daie every lawe;
Kith now ſomwhat thy corage and thy might;
Have mercie on thy ſelf; for any awe
Let not this wretchid wo thine hert ygnawe,
But manly ſet the worlde on ſixe and ſeven,
And if thou die a martyr go to heven.
I woll my ſelf ben with the at this dede,
Though I and all my kin upon a ſtound
Should in a ſtrete as doggis liggin dede,

Through-girt with many a wide blodie wound;
In every case I woll a frend be found;
And if the liste here stervin as a wretche
Anou, the devill spedè him that retche!
This Troilus gan with tho wordis quicke,
And sayid, Frend, graunt mercie! I assent,
But certainly thou maiest nat so me pricke,
Ne painè none ne maie me so tourment,
That for no case, it is not mine entent,
At short wordis, though that I dyin should,
To ravish her but if her self it would.
Why, so mene I (quod Pandare) al this day;
But tell me than, hast thou her well assaied
That sorowest thus? and he answerde him Naie:
Whereof art thou (quod Pandare) than dismaied,
That n'oste not that she wol ben il apaied
To ravishe her, sens thou hast not ben there,
But if that Jove the tolde it in thine ere?
Forthy rise up, as naught ne were, anon,
And washe thy face, and to the king thou wend,
Or he maie wondrin whidir thou art gon;
Thou must with wisedome him and othir blend,
Or upon case he maie astir the send
Or thou be ware: and, shortly, brothir dere!
Be glad, and let me werke in this mattere;
For I shall shape it so that sikirly
Thou shalt this night somtime in some manere
Come spekin with thy ladie privily,
And by her wordis, eke as by her chere,
Thou shalt full sone aperceve and well here
Of her entent, and in this case the best;
And fare now well, for in this poinct I rest.
The swiftè Famè, whiche that fals thingis
Equall reportith like the thingis true,
Was throughout Troie ifled with prest wingis
Fro man to man, and made his tale all newe,
How Calchas doughtir with her brightè hewe
At parliment, withoutin wordis more,
Igrauntid was in chaunge of Antenore.
The whichè tale anon right as Creseide
Had herd, she, whiche that of her fathir rought
(As in this case) right naught, ne whan he deide,
Full busily to Jupiter besought
Yeve him mischauncè that this tretis brought:
But, shortly, lest these talis sothè were
She durst at no wight askin it for fere.
As she that had her hert and all her minde
On Troilus iset so wondir fast
That all this world ne might her love unbind,
Ne Troilus out of her hertè cast,
She would ben his while that her life maie last;
And she thus brennith bothe in love and drede
So that she ne wist what was best to rede.
But as men sene in toune and all about,
That women use ther frendis to visite,
So to Creseide of women came a rout
For pitous joie, and wendin her delite,
And with ther talis, dere inough a mite,
These women, whiche that in the cite dwell,
Thei set 'hem doune, and saied as I shall tell.
(Quod first that one) I am glad truily
Bicause of you, that shall your fathir se.
Anothir saied, Iwis so am not I,
For all to little hath she with us be.
(Quod tho the thirde) I hope iwis that she
Shall bringin us the pece on every side,
That whan she goth Almightie God her gide!
Tho wordis and tho womannishe thingis
She herd 'hem right as though she thennis were;
For God it wote her herte on othir thing is;
Although the body sat emong 'hem there
Her advertence is alwaie ellis where;
For Troilus full fast her soulè sought;
Withoutin worde on him alwaie she thought.
These women that thus wendin her to plese
Aboutin naught gon all ther talis spende;
Soche vanite ne can doen her none ese,
As she that all this menè whilè brende
Of othir passion than thei ywende;
So that she selte almoste her hertè die
For wo, and werie of that companie.
For whichè might she no lengir restrain
Her teris, thei ganin so up to well,
That gavin signis of her bittir pain
In whiche her spirite was and must ydwell,
Remembring her from heven unto which hel
She fallin was sens she forgo the sight
Of Troilus, and sorowfully she sight.
And thilkè folis sitting her about
Wendin that she had wept and sighid sore,
Bicause that she shouldin out of the rout
Departin, and nevir plaie with 'hem more;
And thei that haddin knowin her of yore
Se her so wepe, and thought it was kindnesse,
And eche of 'hem wept eke for her distresse.
And busilie thei gonnin her comforte
On thing God wot on which she little thought;
And with ther talis wendin her disporte,
And to be glad thei oftin her besought;
But soche an ese therwith thei in her wrought
Right as a man is esid for to fele
For ache of hedde to clawen' him on his hele.
But aftir all this nicè vanite
Thei toke ther leve, and home thei wentin all;
Creseidè, full of sorowful pite,
Into her chambre' up went out of the hall,
And on her bedde she gan for dedde to fall,
In purpose nevir thennis for to rise,
And thus she wrought, as I shall you devise.
Her owndid heer, that sonnishe was of hewe,
She rent, and eke her fingirs long and smale
She wrong ful oft, and bade God on her rue,
And with the death to doe bote on her bale;
Her hewè, whilom bright, that tho was pale,
Bare witnesse of her wo and her constreint,
And thus she spake, sobbing in her compleint:
Alas! (quod she) out of this regioun
I, wofull wretche and infortunid wight,
And borne in cursid constellacioun,
Mote gon, and thus departin fro my knight!
Wo worthe, alas! that ilkè day'is light
On which I sawe him first with eyin twain
That causith me and I him all this pain!
Therwith the teris from her eyin two
Doune fell as showris full in Aprill swithe,
Her whitè brest she bet, and for the wo

Aftir the deth ſhe cried a thouſande ſithe,
Sens he that wont her wo was for to lith
She mote forgon, for whiche diſavinture
She helde her ſelfin a forloſt creture.
She ſaied; How ſhall he doen and I alſo!
How ſhould I live if that I from him twin!
O derè herte eke, that I love ſo,
Who ſhall that ſorowe ſlaen that ye ben in!
O Calchas, fathir! thine be all this ſin!
O mothir mine, that clepid were Argive,
Wo worth that daie that thou me bare on live!
To what fine ſhould I live and ſorowen thus?
How ſhould a fiſhe withoutin wat'r dure?
What is Creſeidè worth from Troilus?
How ſhould a plant or' any othir creture
Livin withoute his kindly noriture?
For whiche full oft a byword here I ſeie,
That erthèleſs mote grene medis ſone deye.
I ſhall doen thus, ſens neither ſwerd ne dart
Dare I none handle for the cruilte,
That ilkè daie that I fro you depart,
If ſorowe of that n'ill nat my bane be,
Than ſhall no mete ne drinke ycome in me
Till I my ſoule out of my breſt unſheth,
And thus my ſelvin woll I doen to deth.
And, Troilus, my clothis everichone
Shull blackè ben, in tokining, herte ſwete!
That I am as out of this worlde agone
That wont ywas you to ſet in quiete,
And of mine ordir aie, till deth me mete,
The obſervaunce evir in your abſence
Shall ſorowe ben, complaint and abſtinence.
Mine herte, and eke the wofull ghoſt therein,
Biqueth I with your ſpirite to complain
Eternally, for theſ ſhall nevir twin;
For though in yerth ytwinnid be we twain,
Yet in the felde of pite, out of pain,
That hight Elyſium, we ſhall ben yfere,
As Orpheus and Eurydice his fere.
Thus, hertè mine! for Antenor, alas!
I ſone ſhall be ychaungid, as I wene;
But how ſhull ye doen in this wofull caas?
How ſhall your tendir hertè thus ſuſtein?
But, hertè mine! foryet this ſorowe, and tene,
And me alſo; for, ſothly for to ſeie,
So ye well fare I retche not for to deie.
How might it evir redde ben or iſong
The plaintis that ſhe made in her diſtreſſe?
I n'ot, but as for me, my little tong,
If I diſcrivin would her hevineſſe,
It ſhould ymake her ſorowe ſemè leſſe
Than that it was, and childiſhly deface
Her hie complaint, and therfore I it pace.
Pandarus, whiche that ſent from Troilus
Was to Creſeide, as ye have herd deviſe,
That for the beſt it was accordid thus,
And he full glad to doen him that ſervice
Unto Creſeide in a full ſecrete wiſe,
There as ſhe laie in tourment and in rage,
Came her to tell all wholly his meſſage;
And fonde that ſhe her ſelvin gan to trete
Full pitouſly, for with her ſalè teres
Her breſt and face ibothid was full wete;

Her mightie treſſis of her ſonniſhe heres
Unbroidin hangin all about her eres,
Whiche yavin him very ſignall mattire
Of deth, whiche that her hertè gan deſire.
Whan ſhe him ſawe ſhe gan for ſorowe' anon
Her tery face atwixt her armis hide,
For whiche this Pandare is ſo wo bigon
That in the hous he might unneth abide,
As he that felt ſorowe on every ſide,
For if Creſeide had erſt complainid ſore
Tho gan ſhe plain a thouſande timis more,
And in her aſpre plaintè thus ſhe ſeide;
Pandare, my eme, of joyis mo than two
Was cauſe, cauſing firſt to me Creſeide,
That now tranſmutid bin in cruil wo,
Wher' ſhall I faie to you welcome or no,
That aldirfirſt me brought unto ſervife
Of love, alas! that endith in ſoche wiſe?
Endith than love in wo? ye, or men lieth,
And every worldly bliſſe, as thinkith me;
The ende of bliſſe aie ſorowe occupieth;
And who ſo trowith not that it ſo be
Let him upon me wofull wretchè ſe,
That my ſelf hate, and aie my birthè curſe,
Feling alwaie ſro wicke I go to worſe.
Whoſo me ſeeth ſeeth ſorowe all atonis,
Paine, turment, wo, and plaint, and eke diſtreſſ
Out of my wofull bodie harme there none is,
As langour, anguiſhe, cruill bittirneſſe,
Annoie, ſmarte, drede, furie, and eke ſikneſſe;
I trowe iwis from hevin teris rain
For pite of my aſpre' and cruill pain.
O thou my ſuſtir! full of diſcomfort,
(Quod Pandarus) what thinkiſt thou to doe?
Why ne' haſt thou to thy ſelvin ſome reſport?
Why wilt thou thus thy ſelf, alas! fordo?
Leve all this werke, and take now hede to
That I ſhall ſain, and herken' of gode entent
This that by me thy Troilus the ſent.
Tournid her tho Creſeide a wo making
So grete, that it a deth was for to ſe:
Alas! (quod ſhe) what wordis maie ye bring,
What woll my dere herte ſendin unto me,
Whiche that I dredè nevir more to ſe?
Woll he have plaint or teris ere I wende?
I have inough if he theraftir ſende.
She was right ſoche to ſene in her viſage
As is that wight that men on bere ybinde,
Her face, like of paradis the image
Was all ichaungid in anothir kinde;
The plaie, the laughtir, men wer wont to find
In her, and eke her joyis evrichone,
Ben fledde; and thus lieth Creſeidè alone.
About her eyin two a purpre ring
Bitrent, in ſothfaſt tokening of her pain,
That to behold it was a dedly thing,
For whiche Pandarus ne might nat reſtrain
The teris from his eyin for to rain;
But nathèleſſe as he beſt might he ſeide
From Troilus theſe wordis to Creſeide:
Lo! nece, I trowe well ye han herd all how
The King, with othir lordis, for the beſt
Hath made eſchaunge of Antenor and you,

But 'hem in armis toke and aftir kiſte;
The laſſe wofull of 'hem bothe ne wiſte
Wher that he was, ne might o word out bring,
As I ſaid erſt, for wo and for ſobbing.
The woful teris that thei letin fal
As bittir werin, out of teris kinde,
For paine, as is ligne aloes or gal;
So bittir teris wept nat, as I finde,
The wofull Myrrha through the barke and rinde,
That in this world ther n'is ſo hard an hert
That n'old have rewid on ther painis ſmert.
But whan ther wofull wery goſtis twaine
Returnid ben there as 'hem ought to dwell,
And that ſomwhat to wekin gan the paine
By length of plainte, and ebbin gan the wel
Of ther falt teris, and the hert unſwel,
With broken voice, all horſe for ſhright, Creſeide
To Troilus theſe ilkè wordis ſeide:
O Jove! I die, and mercy the beſeche;
Helpe, Troilus: and therwithal her face
Upon his breſt ſhe laid, and loſt her ſpeche,
Her wofull ſpirite from his propir place
Right with the worde away in point to pace:
And thus ſhe lith with hewis pale and grene
That whilom freſh and fairiſt was to ſene.
This Troilus that on her gan beholde,
Cleping her name, and ſhe lay as for ded,
Withoutin anſwere, and felte her limmes colde,
Her eyin throwin upwarde to her hed,
This ſorouful man can now non othir rede,
But oftin time her coldè mouthe he kiſte:
Where him was wo God and himſelf it wiſte.
He riſith up, and long ſtraite he her leide,
For ſigne of life for aught he can or may
Can he none finde in nothing of Creſeide,
For whiche his ſonge ful oft is Welaway!
But whan he ſawe that ſpechèleſſe ſhe lay,
With ſorouful voice, and hert of bliſſe all bare,
He ſaid how ſhe was fro this world ifare.
So aftir that he long had her complained,
His hondis wronge, and ſaid that was to ſey,
And with his teris ſalt her breſt berained,
He gan tho teris wipin of full drey,
And pitouſly gan for the ſoulè prey,
And ſaid, O Lord! that ſet armin thy trone,
Rewe eke on me, for I ſhal folow' her ſone.
She colde was, and withoutin ſentèment,
For ought he wote, for brethe yet felte he none,
And this was him a preignant argument
That ſhe was forth out of this worlde agone;
And when he ſaw there was non othir wonne
He gan her limmis dreſſe in ſuche manere
As men don them that ſhall ben laide on bere.
And aftir this with ſterne and cruill herte
His ſwerd anon out of his ſheth he twight,
Himſelfe to ſleen, how ſore ſo that him ſmerte,
So that his ſoule her ſoule folowin might
Ther as the dome of Minos would it dight,
Sith Love and cruil Fortune it ne would
That in this world he lengir livin ſhould.
Than ſaid he thus, fulfilde of high diſdaine;
O cruil Jove! and thou Fortune adverſe!
This al and ſome is, falſely have ye ſlaine
Creſeide, and ſith ye may do me no werſe,
Fie on your might and werkin ſo diverſe!
Thus cowardely ye ſhul me nevir winne;
There ſhal no deth me fro my lady twinne.
For I this world, ſith ye have ſlain her thus,
Wol let, and folow' her ſpirit lowe or hie;
Shal nevir lovir ſaine that Troilus
Dare nat for ſerè with his lady die,
For certaine I wol bere her companie;
But ſithe ye wol nat ſuffire' us livin here,
Yet ſuffrith that our ſoulis ben ifere.
And thou, Cite! in whiche I live in wo,
And thou, Priam! and brethrin al ifere!
And thou, my mothir! farwel, for I go,
And Atropos make redy thou my bere,
And thou, Creſeidè! o ſwete herte dere!
Receive thou now my ſpirite, would he ſey,
With ſwerde at hert, al redy for to dey.'
But as God would of ſwough ſhe tho abraide,
And gan to ſighe, and Troilus! ſhe cride;
And he anſwerid, Lady mine, Creſeide!
Livin ye yet? and let his ſwerde doune glide.
Ye, herte mine! that thankid be Cupide,
(Quod ſhe) and therwithal the ſorè ſight,
And he began to glade her as he might;
Toke her in armis two, and kiſte her ofte,
And her to glad he did al his entent,
For whiche her goſt, that flickered aie alofte,
Into her wofull hert aien it went;
But at the laſte, as that her eyin glent
Aſide, anon ſhe gan his ſwerde eſpie
As it lay bare, and gan for ſere to crie,
And aſkid him why he had it out drawe?
And Troilus anon the cauſe her tolde,
And how himſelf therwith he would have ſlawe;
For whiche Creſeide upon him gan beholde,
And gan him in her armis faſt to folde,
And ſaide, O mercy, God! lo whiche a dede!
Alas! how nighe we werin bothè dede!
Than if I ne hadde ſpokin, as grace was,
Ye would have ſlaine your ſelfe anon? quod ſhe.
Ye, doutileſſe. And ſhe anſwerde, Alas!
For by that ilkè Lorde that madè me
I n'olde a forlong waie on live have be,
Aftir your deth, to have ben cronnid quene
Of al the londe the ſunne on ſhinith ſhene;
But with this ſelvè ſwerde which that here is
My ſelfin I would have ſlaine (quod ſhe) tho.
But ho! for we have right inough of this,
And let us riſe and ſtraite to beddè go,
And there let us yſpekin of our wo,
For by that morter whiche that I ſe brenne
Know I ful well that day is nat far henne.
Whan thei wer in ther bedde in armis folde
Naught was it like tho nightis here beforne,
For petouſly eche othir gan beholde,
As thei that haddin al ther bliſſe ilorne,
Bewailing al the daie that thei were borne,
Till at the laſt this wofull wight Creſeide
To Troilus thiſe ilkè wordis ſeide:
La, herte mine! wel wot ye this, (quod ſhe)
That if a wight alwaie his wo complaine,
And ſchith nat how helpin for to be,

It n'is but folie and encrece of paine;
And sens that here assemblid be we twaine
To findin bote of wo that we ben in,
It were all time right sone for to begin.
I am a woman, as ful wel ye wotte,
And as I am avisid sodainly,
So wol I tel it you while it is hotte:
Me thinkith thus, that neithir ye nor I
Ought halfe this wo to makin skilfully,
For there is art inough for to redresse
That yet is misse, and sleen this hevinesse.
Sothe is, the wo the whiche that we ben inne,
For aught I wote, for nothing ellis is
But for the cause that we should ytwinne;
Confidrid al there n'is no more amis:
And what is than a remedy unto this
But that we shape us sone for to mete?
This al and some is, my dere herte swete!
Now that I shal wel bringin it aboute
To comen ayen sone aftir that I go
Therof am I no manir thing in doute,
For dredeleste within a weke or two
I shal hen here; and that it may be so
By alle right, and that in wordis few,
I shal you wel an hepe of wayis shewe;
For whiche I woll nat makin longe sermon,
For time iloste may not recovered be,
But I wol go to my conclusion,
And to the beste in aught that I can se;
And for the love of God forgive it me
If I speke aught aienst your hertis reste,
For trewily I speke it for the beste;
Making alway a protestacion,
That in effect this thing that I shall say
N'is but to shew in you my mocion
To find unto our helpe the beste way,
And takith it none othirwise I pray;
For, finally, what so ye me commaunde
That wol I done, for that is no demaande.
Now herkenith this; Ye have well understond
My goyng graunted is by parliment,
So ferforth that it may not ben withstond
For al this world, as by my jugement;
And sithe there helpith none avisement
To lettin it, lette it passe out of mind,
And let us shape a bettir waie to finde,
The sothe is this; the twinning of us twaine
Wol us disese and cruilly anoie,
But him behovith somtime havin paine
That servith Love, if that he wol have joie;
And sith I shal no farthir out of Troie
Than I maie ride aien on halfe a morowe
It ought the lasse cauſin us for to sorowe;
So as I shal nat now ben hid in mewe,
That day by day, min owne herte dere!
Sens wel ye wote that it is nowe a trewe,
Ye shal ful wel al mine estate yhere,
And er that truce is done I shal ben here;
And thus have ye both Antenor iwonne
And me also. Bethe glad now if ye conne.
And thinke it right thus, Creseide is now agen,
But what? she shal come hastily ayen:
And whan? alas! by God, lo, right anon,
Er dayis ten, this dare I safely saine,
And than as erste shall we be bothe faine,
So as we shall togithers evir dwell,
That al this worlde ne might our blisse tell.
I se that oft time, there as we ben nowe,
That for the beste, our counsaile for to hide,
Ye speke nat with me nor I with you
In fourtenight, ne se you go ne ride;
And may ye nat ten dayis than abide,
For mine honour, in suche an avinture?
Iwis ye mowe, or ellis lite endure.
Ye knowe eke howe that all my kin is here
But if that onely it my fathir be,
And eke mine othir thingis al ifere,
And namily my dere herte ye,
Whom that I n'olde levin for to se
For al this worlde, as wide as it hath space,
Or ellis se I nevir Jov'is face.
Why trowin ye my fathir in this wise
Covetith so to se me, but for drede
Leste in this soune that folkis me dispise
Bicause of him for his unhappy dede?
What wote my fathir what life that I lede?
For if he wist in Troie how wel I fare
Us nedid for my wending nat to care.
Ye sene that every day eke more and more
Men taste of pece, and it supposid is
That men the Quene Helena shall restore,
And Grekis us restore that is amis;
So though there ne were comfort none but this,
That men purposin pece on every side,
Ye may the bett at ese of herte abide;
For if that it be pece, mine herte dere!
The nature of the pece mote nedis drive
That men must entrecommunin ifere,
And to and fro eke ride and gone as blive
Al day, as thicke as been flien from an hive,
And every wight have liberty to bleve
Where as him list the bet withoutin leve.
And though so be that pece ther maie be none,
Yet hither, though ther nevir pece ne were,
I must ycome, for whidir should I gone,
Or how, mischaunce I should I dwellin there
Among tho men of armis yvre' in fere?
For whiche, as wisely God my soule rede,
I can nat sene wherof ye shouldin drede.
Have here anothir way, if it so be
That al this thing ne maie you not suffice;
My fathir, as ye knowin wele parde,
Is holdin olde and ful of covitise,
And I right nowe have foundin al the gise
Withoutin nette wherwith I shal him hent,
And herkenith now if that ye wol assent.
Lo! Troilus, men saine full harde it is
Th. wolfe fal and the wedir whole to have;
This is to saine, that men full oft iwis
Mote spendin parte the remnant for to save;
For aie with golde men maie the hert ygrave
Of him that is set upon covitise;
And how I mene I shal it you devise.
The movable whiche I have in this toune
Unto my fathir shal I take, and saie,
That right for trust and for salvacioun

It sent is from a frende of his or twaie,
The which frendis do fervently him praie
To sendin aftir more, and that in hie,
While that this toun stant thus in jeopardie;
And that shal be of golde huge quantite;
Thus shal I sain, but lest folke it aspide
This maie be sent by no wight but by me;
I shal eke shewin him, if pece betide,
What frendis that I have on every side,
To doe the wrathe of Priamus to pace
Towardis him, and don him stand in grace.
So what for o thing and for othir, swete!
I shal him so enchauntin with my sawes
That right in hevin his soule shal he mete;
For al Apollo or his clerkis lawes,
Or calculing, availith nat thre hawes;
Destre of golde shal so his soule blende
That as me liste I shall wel make an ende.
And if he would aught by his sort it preve
If that I lie, in certaine I shal sonde
Disturbin him, and plucke him by the sleve,
Makin his sorte, and berin him on honde,
He hath nat wel the goddis undirstonde,
For goddis speke in amphibologies,
And for o sothe thei tellin twenty lies:
Eke dred fond first goddis, I suppose,
Thus shal I saine, and that his cowarde herte
Made him amis the goddis text to glose:
Whan he for ferde out of Troie sterte;
And but I makin him sone to converte,
And done my rede within a day or twey,
I wol to you oblige me to dey.
And trewily, as writtin wel I finde,
That al this thing was said of gode entent,
And that her herte trewe was and kinde
Towardis him, and spake right as she ment,
And that she starse for wo nigh when she went,
And was in purpose evir to be trewe,
This writin thei that of her werkis knewe.
This Troilus, with hert and eris sprad,
Herde al this thing devisid to and fro,
And verily it semid that he had
The selvin witte, but yet to let her go
His herte misforyave him evirmo;
But finally he gan his hert wrest
To trustin her, and toke it for the best;
For which the grete fury of his penaunce
Was quent with hope, and therwith hem bitwene
Began for joye the amorous daunce;
And as the birdis when the sunne shene
Delitin in ther songe in levis grene,
Right so the wordis that thei spake ifere
Delitin them, and made ther hertis chere.
But nathelesse, the wendin of Creseide
For al this world may nat out of his minde,
For whiche ful oft he petously her preide
That of her haste he might her trewe yfinde,
And saide her, Certis if ye be unkinde,
And but ye come at daie set into Troie,
Ne shal I nere have hele, honor, ne joie:
For all so sothe a sunne uprist to morow,
And God so wisely thou me wofull wretche
To rest ybring out of this cruil sorow,
I wol my selvin sle if that ye dretche,
But of my deth though litil be to retche,
Yet er that ye me causin so to smerte
Dwel rathir here mine owne dere swete herte!
For trewily, mine owne lady dere!
The sleightis yet that I have herd you stere
Ful shapely ben to fallin al ifere,
For thus men saith, *That one thinkith the here,*
But al anothir thinkith the ledere:
Your sire is wise, and said is out of drede
Men may the wise outrenne and not outrede.
It is full harde to haltin unespied
Before a crepil, for he can the crafte;
Your fathir is in sleight as Argus eyed,
For albe' it that his mowble' is him birafte
His olde sleight is yet so with him lafte
Ye shal not blende him for your womanhede,
Ne saine aright, and that is al my drede.
I n'ot if pece shall evirmo betide,
But pece or no, for erneste ne for game,
I wote sith Calchas on the Grekis side
Hath onis ben, and lost so foule his name,
He dare no more come here ayen for shame,
For whiche that we, for ought I can espy,
To trustin on n'is but a fantasie.
Ye shal eke sene your fathir shall you glose
To ben a wife, and, as he can wel preche.
He shal some Greke so prese and wel alose,
That rawisshin he shal you with his speche,
Or do you done by force, as he shal teche,
And Troilus, on whom you n'il have routh,
Shal causeleste so stervin in this trouth.
And ore al this your fathir shal dispise
Us al, and saine this cite is but lorne,
And that th' assege nevir shal arise;
For why? the Grekis have it alle sworne,
Til we ben slaine and doun our wallis torne;
And thus he shal you with his wordis fere,
That aie drede I that ye wol blevin there.
Ye shall eke sene so many a lusty knight
Among the Grekis, ful of worthinesse,
And eche of hem with hertè, wit, and might,
To plesin you done al his businesse,
That ye shull dullin of the rudinesse
Of us the sely Trojans, but if routhe
Romordin you or vertue of your trouthe.
And this to me so grevouse is to thinke
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende,
Ne dredeleste in me there may nat sinke
O gode opinion if that ye wende;
For why? your fathir's sleightis wol us shende:
And if ye gone, as I have tolde you yore,
So thinke I n'am but ded withoutin more;
For which with humble, true, and pitous, hert
A thousande timis mercie I you praie,
So rewith on mine aspre painis smert,
And doth somwhat as that I shal you saie,
And let us stele away betwixt us twaie,
And thinke that foly' is whan a man maie chese
For accident his substaunce for to lese.
I mene thus, that sens we mowe or daie
Well stele awaie, and ben togither so,
What wis were it to puttin in assaie

(In caſe ye ſhouldin to your fathir go)
If that ye mightin come aien or no?
Thus mene I, that it were a grete folie
To put that ſikirneſſe in je ꝑdie.
And, vulgarly to ſpekin of ſubſtaunce,
Of treſour may we bothè with us lede
Ynough to live in honour and pleſaunce
Untill the timè that we ſhall ben dede,
And thus we may eſchewin all this drede;
For every othir waie ye can recorde
Mine hert iwis maie therwith nat acorde.
And hardily ne dredith no poverte,
For I have kin and frendis ellis where
That though we comin in our bare ſherte
Us ſhuld nevir lacke ne golde ne gere,
But ben honourid while we dweltin there;
And go we' anone, for as in mine entent
This is the beſt, if that ye woi aſſent.
Creſeidè with a ſighe right in this wiſe
Anſwerid him; Iwis, my dere hert trewe!
We maie well ſtele away as ye deviſe,
And findin ſuche unthrifty wayis newe,
But arterwarde ful ſore it wol us rewe;
And helpe me God ſo at my moſtè nede
As cauſ leſſe ye ſuffrin al this drede:
For thilkè day that I for cheriſhing
Or drede of fathir, or for othir wight,
Or for eſtate, delite, or for weding,
Be falſe to you, my Troilus, my knight!
Saturnus doughtir Juno, through her might,
As wode as Atalanta do me dwell
Eternally in Styx, the pit of hell.
And this on every god celeſtiall
I ſwere it you, and eke on eche goddeſſe,
On every nymph and deite infer. all,
On Satyrys and Faunys more and leſſe,
That halvè goddis ben of wildirneſſe;
And Atropos my thred of life to breſt
If I be falſe. Now trowe me if you leſt.
And thou, Simois, that as an arowe clere
Through Troie renniſt aie dounward to the ſe,
Be witneſſe of this worde that ſaid is here,
That thilkè day that I untrew be
To Troilus, mine ownè hertè ſre!
That thou returne backewarde unto thy well,
And I with body and ſoule ſinke to hell.
But that ye ſpeke awaie thus for to go,
And lettin al your frendis, God forbede
For any woman that ye ſhouldin ſo!
And namily ſens Troie hath now ſuch nede
Of helpe; and eke of o thing takith hede,
If this were wiſte, my life laie in balaunce
And your honor, God ſhilde us fro miſchaunce!
And if ſo be that pece hereaſtir take,
As al daie happith aſtir angre game.
Why, Lorde! the ſorow' and wo ye woldin make
That ye ne durſt comin ayen for ſhame!
And er that ye jeopardin ſo your name
Beth nat to haſty in this hottè fare,
For haſty man ne wantith nevir care.
What trowe ye the peple eke all aboute
Would of it ſay? it is ful light to' arede;
Thei woldin ſay, and ſwere it out of doute,
That love ne drave you nat to don this dede,
But luſte voluptuous and cowarde drede:
Thus were al loſte iwis mine hertè dere!
Your honour, whiche that now ſo ſhinith clere.
And alſo thinkith on mine honeſte,
That flourith yet, how foule I ſhould it ſhende,
And with what filth it ſpottid ſhouldè be
If in this forme I ſhouldè with you wende:
Ne though I lived unto the worldis ende
My name ſhould I nevir ayenward winne:
Thus were I loſt, and that were routh and ſinne.
And forthy ſle with reſon al this hete;
Men ſaine, *The ſuffraunt overcometh parde,*
Eke *Who ſo wol have leſe mote lete:*
Thus makith vertue of neceſſite
By pacience, and thinke that lorde is he
Of Fortune aie that naught woll of her retch,
And ſhe ne dauntith no wight but a wretch.
And truſtith this, that certis, hertè ſwete!
Or Phœbus ſuſtir, Lucina the ſhene,
The Lion paſſith out of this Arite
I woll ben here withoutin any wene;
I mene, as helpe me Juno, hevin's quene,
The tenth daie, but if that deth me aſſaile,
I woll you ſene withoutin any faile.
And now, ſo this be ſothe (quod Troilus)
I ſhall well ſuffre unto the tenth daie,
Sens that I ſe that nede it mote ben thus;
But for the love of God, if it be maie,
So let us ſtelin privily awaie,
For evre' in one as for to live in reſt,
Mine hertè ſaieth that it woll be the beſt.
O mercie, God! what life is this? (quod ſhe)
Alas' ye ſlea me thus for very tene;
I ſe well now that ye miſtruſtin me,
For by your wordis it is wel iſene:
Now for the love of Cynthia the ſhene
Miſtruſt me nat thus cauſeleſſe for routh,
Sens to be true I have you plight my trouth.
And thinkith wel that ſomtime it is wit
To ſpendin a time a time for to win;
Ne parde lorne am I nat fro you yet,
Though that we ben a daiè or two atwin:
Drive out tho fantaſies you have within,
And truſtith me, and levith eke your ſorow,
Or here my trouth, I wol nat live til morow;
For if ye wiſt how ſore it doeth me ſmerte
Ye wouldè ceſſe of this! for God thou woſt
The pure ſpirite ywepith in mine herte
To ſene you wepin whiche that I love moſt,
And that I mote gon to the Grekis hoſte;
Ye, n'ere it that I wiſt a remedie
To come ayen right here I wouldè die.
But certis I am not ſo nice a wight
That I ne can imaginin a waie
To come ayen that daie that I have hight,
For who maie holden' a thing that wol awaie
My fathir naught for all his queinte plaie;
And by my thrift my wending out of Troie
Anothir daie ſhall tourne us all to joie.
Forthy with all mine herte I you beſeke,
If that you liſt doen ought for my praiere,
And for the love whiche that I love you eke

That er that I departin fro you here
That of ſo gode a comfort and a chere
I maie you ſene that ye maie bring at reſt
Mine hertē, whiche is at the poinct to breſt,
And ore al this I praie you, quod ſhe tho,
Mine ownē hert'is ſothfaſt ſuffiſaunce!
Sith I am thine all whole withoutin mo,
That while that I am abſent no pleſaunce
Of othir doe me fro your remembraunce,
For I am er agaſt; for why? men rede
That love is thing aie full of buſie drede.
For in this worlde there livith ladie nong,
If that ye were untrē, as God defende!
That ſo betrayid were or wo begon
As I, that allē trouthe in you entende;
And doutēleſs if that othir wende
I n'ere but dedde, and er ye cauſe yfinde
For Godd'is love ſo beth me naught unkinde.
To this anſwerid Troilus, and ſeide,
Now God, to whom there n'is no cauſe iwrie,
Me glad, as wis I nevir to Creſeide,
Sithe thilke daie I ſaw her firſt with eye,
Was falſe, ne nevir ſhall till that I die:
At ſhort wordis, well ye maie me bileve;
I can no more; it ſhall be founde al preve.
Graunt mercy, gode hert mine! iwis, (quod ſhe)
And, bliſsful Venus! let me nevir ſterve
Er I maie ſtonde of pleſaunce in degre
To quite him well that ſo well can deſerve,
And while that God my wit will me conſerve
I ſhall ſo doen, ſo true I have you found,
That aie honour to me ward ſhall rebounde:
For truſtith well that your eſtate roiall,
Ne veine delite, nor onely worthineſſe
Of you in werre or turnaie marciall,
Ne pompe, arraie, nobley, or eke richeſſe,
Ne madin me to rue on your diſtreſſe,
But morall vertue, groundid upon trouth,
That was the cauſe I firſt had on you routh:
Eke gentle hert, and manhode that ye had,
And that ye had (as me thought) in diſpite
Evèry thing that ſownid into bad,
As rudēneſſe, and pepliſhe appetite,
And that your reſon bridlid your delite;
This made abovin evèry creture
That I was yours, and ſhall while I maie dure.
And this may length of yeris nat fordoe,
Ne remuable Fortunē deface,
But Jupiter, that of his might maie doe
The ſorowfull be glad, ſo yeve us grace
Er nightis tenne to metin in this place,
So that it maie your herte and mine ſuffiſe:
And fare now well, for time is that ye riſe.
And aftir that thei long iplanid had,
And oft ikiſt, and ſtraite in armis folde,
The daie gan riſe, and Troilus him clad,
And rufully his ladie gan behold,
As he that felt of deth'is caris cold,
And to her grace he gan him recommaunde;
Where he was wo this holde I no demaunde;
For mann'is hedde imaginin ne can,
Ne' entendèment confidir, ne tongue tell,
The cruill painis of this wofull man,
That paſſin every tourment doune in hell;
For whan he ſawe that ſhe ne might ydwell,
Whiche that his ſoule out of his body rent,
Withoutin more out of the chambre' he went.

TROILUS & CRESEIDE.

INCIPIT LIBER QUINTUS.

Aprochin gan the fatall deſtine
That Jovis hath in diſpoſicioun,
And to you angrie Parcæ, ſuſtrin thre,
Committith to doen execucioun,
For whiche Creſeidè muſt out of the toun,
And Troilus ſhall dwellin forth in pine
Till Lacheſis his threde no lengir twine.

The goldin treſſid Phœbus high on loft
Thryis had allè with his bemis clere
The ſnowis molte, and Zephirus as oft
Ibrought ayen the tendir levis grene,
Sens that the ſonne of Hecuba the Quene
Began to love her firſt, for whom his ſorowe
Was all that ſhe departin ſhould amorowe.

Full redy was at primè Diomede
Creſeide unto the Grekis hoſte to lede,
For ſorowe' of whiche ſhe felt her hertè blede,
As ſhe that ne wiſt what was beſt to rede;
And truily, as men in bokis rede,
Men wiſtè nevir woman have the care,
Ne was ſo lothe out of a toune to fare.

This Troilus withoutin rede or lore,
As man that hath his joyis eke forlore,
Was waiting on his ladie evirmore,
As ſhe that was the ſothfaſt croppe and more
Of all his luſt or joyis heretofore;
But Troilus, now farewell all thy joie!
For ſhalt thou nevir ſene her eſt in Troie.

Soth is, that while he bode in this manere
He gan his wo full manly for to hide,
That well unneth it ſene was in his chere,
But at the yatè there ſhe ſhould out ride
With certain folke he hovid her to' abide,
So wo bigon, all would he not him plain,
That on his hors unneth he ſate for pain.

For ire he quoke, ſo gan his hertè gnawe,
Whan Diomede on hors gan him to dreſſe,
And ſaied unto himſelf this ilkè ſawe;
Alas! (quod he) this foule o wretchidneſſe
Why ſuffre' I it? why n'ill I it redreſſe?
Were it nat bet at onis for to die
Than evirmore in langour thus to drie?

Why n'ill I make at oniis riche and pore
To have inough to doen er that ſhe go?
Why n ill I bring all Troie upon a rore?
Why n'ill I ſlaen this Diomede alſo?
Why n'ill I rathir with a man or two
Stele her awaie? Why woll I this endure?
Why n'ill I helpin to mine ownè cure?

But why he n'oldè doen ſo fell a dede
That ſhall I ſain, and why him liſt it ſpare;
He had in herte alwaie a manir drede
Leſt that Creſeide, in rumour of this fare,
Should have ben ſlain: lo! this was al his care
And ellis certain, as I ſayid yore,
He had it doen withoutin wordis more.

Creſeidè, whan ſhe redy was to ride,
Full ſorowfully ſighed, and ſaied Alas!
But forthe ſhe mote for aught that maie betide,
And forthe ſhe ritte a full ſobirly paſe;
There is none othir remedy' in this caſe:
What wondir is though that her ſore ſmert
Whan ſhe forgoith her owne ſwetè herte?

This Troilus in giſe of curtiſie,
With hauke on hond, and with' an hugè rout
Of knightis, rode and did her companie,
Ypaſſing all the valey ferre without,
And ferthir would have riddin out of doubt
Full faine, and wo was him to gone ſo ſone,
But tourne he muſt, and it was eke ſo doen.

And right with that was Antenor icome
Out of the Grekis hoſte, and every wight
Was of him glad, and ſaied he was welcome;
And Troilus, all n'ere his hertè light,
He pained him with all his fullè might
Him to withholde of weping at the leſt,
And Antenor he kiſt, and made grete feſt.

And therwithall he muſt his leve ytake,
And caſt his eye upon her pitouſly,
And nere he rode, his cauſe for to make,
To take her by the honde all ſobirlie;
And Lorde! ſo ſhe gan wepin tendirlie,
And he full ſoft and ſlighly gan her ſeie,
Now holde your daie, and doe me not to deie.

With that his courſir tournid he about
With face full pale, and unto Diomede
No werde he ſpake, ne none of all his rout,
Of whiche the ſonne of Tydeus toke hede,
As he that kouthè more than the crede
In ſoche a craft, and by the rain her hent,
And Troilus to Troie homwardis went.

This Diomede, that lad her by the bridell,
Whan that he ſawe the folke of Troie awaie,
Thought all my labor ſhall not ben on idell,
If that I maie, for ſomwhat ſhall I ſaie,
For at the worſt it ſhortin maie our waie,
I have herd ſaie eke timis twiſè twelve
He is a fole that woll foryete him ſelve.

But nathèleſſe this thought he well inough,
That certainly I am aboutin naught
If that I ſpeke of love or make it tought,
For doutileſs if ſhe have in her thought
Him that I geſſe he maie not ben ibrought
So ſone awaie; but I ſhall finde a mene
That ſhe nat yet wete ſhall what that I mene.

This Diomede, as he that could his gode,
Whan this was doen gan fallin forth in ſpeche
Of this and that, and aſkin why ſhe ſtode
In ſoche diſeſe? and gan her eke beſeche,
That if that he encreſin might or eche
With any thing her eſe that ſhe ſhould
Commaunde it him, and ſaid he doen it would:

For truily he ſwore her as a knight [pleſe
That ther n'as thing with which he might her
That he n'olde doen his pain and al his might
To doen it, for to doen her herte an eſe,
And prayid her ſhe would her ſorowe' apeſe,
And ſaied, Iwis we Grekis can have joie
To honoure you as well as folke of Troie.

He ſaide eke thus, I wot you thinkith ſtraunge,
No wondir is, for it is to you newe,
Th' acqueintaunce of theſe Trojans for to chaunge
For folke of Grece, which that ye nevir knewe;
But wouldè nevir God but if as true
A Greke ye ſhould emong us all yfinde
As any Trojan is, and eke as kinde.

And by the cauſe I ſwore you, lo! right now
To ben your frende, and help you to my might,
And for that more acqueintaunce eke of you
Have I had than anothir ſtraungir wight,
So fro this forth I praie you daie and night
Commaundith me, how ſore ſo that me ſmerte.
To doen all that maie like unto your herte:

And that ye me wold as your brothir trete,
And takith not my frendſhip in diſpite;
And though your ſorowes ben for thingis grete,
N'ot I nat why, but out of more reſpite
Mine hert hath for to' amende it grete delite,
And if I maie your harmis nat redreſſe
I am right ſorie for your hevineſſe:

For though ye Trojans with us Grekis wroth
Have many' a daie ben, alwaie yet parde
O god of Love in ſothe we ſervin bothe:
And for the love of God, my ladie fre,
Whom ſo ye hate as beth not wroth with me,
For truily there can no wight you ſerve
That halfe ſo loth your wrathe would deſerve.

And n'ere it that we ben ſo nere the tent
Of Calchas, whiche that ſene us bothè maie,
I would of this you tell all mine entent;
But this enſelid till anothir daie:
Yeve me your honde; I am and ſhall be aie,
God help me ſo, while that my life maie dure,
Your owne abovin every creture.

Thus ſaid I nere er now to woman borne,
For God mine herte as wiſely gladè ſo
I lovid nevir woman here beforne
As paramours, ne nevir ſhall no mo;
And for the love of God be not my fo,
All can I not to you, my ladie dere!
Complain aright, for I am yet to lere.

And wondrith nought, min ownè lady bright!
Though that I ſpeke of love to you thus blive
For I have herd or this of many' a wight
That lovid thing he nere ſaw in his live;
Eke I am not of power for to ſtrive
Ayenſt the god of Love, but him obaie
I woll alwaie, and mercie I you praie.

Ther beth ſo worthy knightis in this place,
And ye ſo faire, that everiche of 'hem all
Woll painin him to ſtondin in your grace;
But might to me ſo faire a grace befall
That ye me for your ſervaunt wouldè call,
So lowly ne ſo truily you ſerve
N'ill none of 'hem as I ſhall till I ſterve.

Creſeide unto that purpoſe lite anſwerde,
As ſhe that was with ſorowe' oppreſſid ſo
That in effect ſhe naught his talis herde,
But here and there now here a worde or two;
Her thought her forowfull herte bruſt atwo;
For whan ſhe gan her fathir ſerre eſpie
Well nigh dowme of her hors ſhe gan to ſie.

But nathèleſſe ſhe thonkith Diomede
Of all his travaile and his godè chere,
And that him liſt his frendſhip to her bede,
And ſhe acceptith it in gode manere,
And woll do fain that is him lefe and dere,
And truſtin him ſhe would, and well ſhe might,
As ſayid ſhe, and from her hors ſhe' alight.
Her fathir hath her in his armis nome,
And twentie times he kiſt his doughtir ſwete,
And ſaied, O derè doughtir mine! welcome.
She ſaied eke ſhe was fain with him to mete,
And ſtode forth ſtill, mild, muet, and manſuete.
But here I leve her with her fathir dwell,
And forthe I woll of Troilus you tell.
To Troie is come this wofull Troilus
In ſorowe abowin all ſorowes ſmert,
With felon loke and with face diſpitous,
Tho ſodainly doune from his hors he ſtert,
And through his paleyſe with a ſwollin hert
To chambir went; of nothing toke he hede,
Ne none to him dare ſpeke o worde for drede.
And there his ſorowes thät he ſparid had
He yave an iſſue large, and Deth he tride,
And in his throwis frenetike and mad
He curſith Jove, Apollo, and Cupide,
He curſith Bachus, Ceres, and Cypride,
His birthe, himſelf, his fate, and eke Nature,
And ſave his ladie every creture.
To bed he goth, and wellith there and turneth
In furie as doeth Ixion in hell,
And in this wiſe he nigh till daie ſojourneth,
But tho began his herte alite unſwell
Through teris which that gonnin up to wel,
And pitouſly he cried upon Creſeide,
And to himſelf right thus he ſpake and ſeide;
Where is mine owne ladie lefe and dere?
Where is her white breſt? where is it? where?
Where ben her armis and her eyin clere
That yeſterdaie this time with me were?
Now maie I wepe alone many a tere,
And graſpe about I maie, but in this place
Save a pilowe I find naught to embrace.
How ſhall I doen? whan ſhall ſhe come again?
I n'ot, alas! Why let I her ſo go?
As wouldè God I had as tho be ſlain!
O herte mine, Creſeidè! o ſwetè ſo!
O ladie mine! that I love and no mo,
To whom for evirmo mine herte I vowe,
Se how I die; ye n'ill me not reſcowe!
Who ſeith you now, my right lodèſterre?
Who ſittith now or ſtant in your preſence?
Who can comfortin now your hert'is werre,
Now I am gon whom ye yeve audience?
Who ſpekith for me now in my abſence?
Alas! no wight, and that is all my care,
For well wote I as ill as I ye fare.
How ſhould I thus ten dayis full endure
Whan I the firſt night havin all this tene?
And how ſhall ſhe eke, ſorowfull creture,
For tendirneſſe how ſhall ſhe this ſuſtene
Soche wo for me? o! pitous, pale, and grene,
Shall woxin ben her freſhe womanly face
For langour er ſhe tourne unto this place.

And whan he fill in any ſlombringis
Anon begin he ſhouldè for to grone,
And dremin of the dredfulliſt thingis
That might yben, as mete he were alone
In place horrible, making aie his mone,
Or metin that he was emongis all
His enemies, and in their hondis fall.
And therewithall his bodie ſhouldè ſterte,
And with the ſtarte all ſodainly awake,
And ſoche a tremour fele about his herte,
That of the fere his bodie ſhouldè quake,
And therewithall he ſhould a noiſe ymake,
And ſemin as though he ſhould fallin depe,
From high aloft, and than he wouldè wepe;
And rewin on himſelf ſo pitouſly
That wondir was to here his fantaſie;
Anothir time he ſhouldè mightily
Comfort himſelf, and ſain it was folie
So cauſèleſſe ſoche drede and wo to drie,
And eft begin his aſpre ſorowes newe,
That every man might on his painis rewe.
Who could tell all aright, or full diſcrive
His wo, his plaint, his langour, and his pine?
Nat all the men that han or ben on live:
Thou, Redir, maieſt thy ſelf full well devine
That ſoche a wo my wit can not define;
On idell for to write it ſhould I ſwinke
Whan that my wit is werie it to thinke.
On hevin yet the ſteris werin ſene,
Although full pale iwoxin was the mone,
And whitin began the horizon ſhene
All eſtwardis, as it is wont to doen,
And Phœbus with his roſie cartè ſone
Gan aftir that to dreſſe him up to fare
Whan Troilus hath ſent aftir Pandare.
This Pandare, that of all the daie beforne
Ne might have comin Troilus to ſe,
Although that he on his hedde it had ſworne,
For with the King Priam al daie was he,
So that it laie nat in his liberte
No where to gon, but on the morowe' he went
To Troilus, whan that he for him ſent;
For in his herte he couldè well devine
That Troilus all night for ſorowe woke,
And that he wouldè tell him of his pine;
This knewe he well inough withoutin boke;
For which to chambir ſtreight the way he toke,
And Troilus tho ſobirly he grette,
And on the bedde full ſone he gan him ſette.
My Pandarus! (quod Troilus) the ſorowe
Whiche that I drie I maie not long endure;
I trowe I ſhall not livin till to morowe;
For whiche I would alwaies on avinture
To the devifin of my ſepoulture
The forme, and of my movble thou diſpone
Right as the ſemith beſt is for to doen:
But of the fire and flambè funèrall
In whiche my body brennin ſhall to glede,
And of the feſt and playis Paleſtrall
At my vigile I praie the take gode hede
That that be well, and offir Mars my ſtede,
My ſwerde, mine helme, and, levè brothir dere!
My ſhelde to Pallas yeve that ſhinith clere

The poudre' in which mine hert ibrend ſhall
That praie I the thou take, and it conſerve [turn
In a veſſell that men clepith an Urne,
Of golde, and to my lady that I ſerve,
For love of whom thus pitouſly I ſterve,
So yeve it her, and doe me this pleſaunce
To praie her kepe it for a remembraunce:
For well I ſelin by my maladie,
And by my dremis now and yore ago,
All certainly that I mote nedis die;
The oule eke whiche that hight Aſcalaphe
Hath aſtir me ſhright all theſe nightis two:
And god Merc'urie, now of me woful wreech
The ſoulè guide, and whan the liſt it fetche.
Pandare anſwerid and ſaied, Troilus,
My derè frende! as I have told the yore
That it is folie for to forowen thus,
And cauſèleſſe, for whiche I can no more,
But who ſo woll not trowin rede ne lore
I can not ſene in him no remedie,
But let him worchin with his fantaſie.
But, Troilus, I praie the tell me now
If that thou trowe er this that any wight
Hath lovid paramours as well as thou?
Ye, God wot, and fro many' a worthie knight
Hath his ladie forgon a fourtènight
And he nat yet made halvindele the fare;
What nede is the to makin all this care?
Sens daie by daie thou maieſt thy ſelvin ſe,
That from his love or ellis from his wife
A man mote twinnin of neceſſite,
Ye, though he love her as his owne life,
Yet n'ill he with himſelf thus makin ſtrife;
For well thou woſt, my levè brothir dere!
That alwaie frendis maie not ben ifere.
How doen this folke that ſene ther lovis wedded
By frendis might, as it bitidith oft,
And ſene 'hem in ther ſpouſis bedde ibedded?
God wote thei take it wiſely faire and ſoft;
For why? gode hope halt up ther herte aloft,
And for thei can a time of ſorowe endure;
As time 'hem hurtith a time doeth 'hem cure.
So ſhouldiſt thou endure, and lettin ſlide
The time, and fondè to ben glad and light;
Tenne dayis n'is not ſo long to abide;
And ſens ſhe to comin the hath behight
She n'ill her heſt brekin for any wight,
For drede the nat that ſhe n'ill finde a waie
To come ayen, my life that durſt I laie.
Thy ſwevines eke, and all ſoche fantaſie,
Drive out, and let 'hem farin to miſchaunce,
For thei procede of thy melancolie,
That doeth the fele'in ſlepe all this penaunce;
A ſtrawe for all ſwevenis ſignifiaunce!
God helpe me ſo! I coumpt 'hem not a bene;
There wot no man aright what dremis mene.
For preſtis of the temple tellin this,
That dremis ben the revelacions
Of goddis, and als well thei tell iwis
That thei ben infernalle illuſions,
And lechis ſaine that of complections
Procedin thei, of faſt or glotonie:
Who wot in ſothe thus what thei ſignifie?
Eke othir ſain that through impreſſions,
As if a wight hath faſt a thing in minde,
That thereof comith ſoche avisions;
And othir ſain, as thei in bokis finde,
That aftir timis of the yere by kinde
Men dreme, and that th' effect goth by the mone:
But leve no dreme, for it is not to doen.
Well worth of dremis aie theſe oldè wives;
And truly eke auguric of theſe foulis,
For fere of which men wenin leſe ther lives,
As ravin's qualm, or ſchriching of theſe oulis,
To trowin on it bothè falſe and foule is:
Alas! alas! that ſo noble' a creture
As is a man ſhould dredin ſoche ordure!
For whiche with all mine hert I the beſeche
Unto thy ſelf that all this thou foryeve;
And riſe now up, withoutin morè ſpeche,
And let us caſt how forth maie beſt be drive
The time, and eke how freſhly we maie live
Whan ſhe comith, the which ſhall be right ſone;
God helpe me ſo the boſt is thus to doen.
Riſe, let us ſpeke of luſtie life in Troie
That we have lad, and forth the time drive,
And eke of time coming us rejoie,
That bringin ſhall our bliſſe now ſo blive,
And langour of theſe twiſe dayis five
We ſhall therwith ſo foryet or oppreſſe
That well unneth it doen ſhall us dareſſe.
This toune is full of lordis all about,
And truis laſtith all this mene while;
Go we playin us in ſome luſtie rout,
To Sarpedon, not hennis but a mile,
And thus thou ſhalt the time well begile,
And drive it forth unto that bliſsfull morowe
That thou her ſe that cauſe is of thy ſorowe.
Now riſe, my derè brothir Troilus!
For certis it non honour is to the
To wepe, and in thy bedde to roukin thus,
For truily of o thing truſt to me,
If thou thus ligge a daie, or two, or thre,
The folke wol wene that thou for cowardiſe
The fainiſt ſick, and that thou darſt not riſe.
This Troilus anſwerde, O brothir dere!
This knowin folke that have iſuffrid pain,
That though he wepe and make ſorowfull chere
That feliih harme and ſmerte in every vain
No wondir is; and though I evir plain
Or alwaie wepe I am nothing to blame,
Sens I have loſt the cauſe of al my game.
But ſithins of fine force I mote ariſe
I ſhal ariſe as ſone as er I maie,
And God, to whom mine herte I ſacrifice,
So ſende us haſtily the tennith daie,
For was there nevir ſoule ſo faine of Maie
As I ſhall ben whan ſhe comith in Troie
That cauſe is of my tourment and my joie.
But whidir is thy rede, (quod Troilus),
That we maie plaie us beſt in al this toun?
By God my counſaile is (quod Pandarus)
To ride and plaie us with King Sarpedoun.
So long of this thei ſpekin up and doun
Till Troilus gan at the laſt aſſent
To riſe, and forth to Sarpedon thei went,

This Sarpedon, as he that honourable
Was all his live, and full of hie prowesse,
With all that might iservid ben on table
That deinte was, all coste it grete richesse,
He fedde 'hem daie by daie, that foche nobleſſe,
As saiden bothe the moste and eke the lest,
Was nere er that daie wiste at any fest:
Nor in this worlde there is none instrument
Delicious through winde or touch on corde,
As ferre as any wight hath er iwent,
That tongè tell or hertè maie recorde
But at that fest it was well herd acorde,
Ne' of ladies eke so faire a companie
Or daunce er tho was never sene with eye.
But what availith this to Troilus,
That for his sorowe nothing of it rought,
But evir in one his hertè pitous
Full busily Creseide his ladie sought?
On her was evir all that his herte thought,
Now this now that so fast imagining
That gladin iwis can him no festing.
These ladies eke that at this festè bene,
Sens that he sawe his ladie was awaie,
It was his sorowe on 'hem for to sene,
Or for to here on instrumentis plaie;
For she that of his hert berith the kaie
Was absent, lo! this was his fantasie,
That no wight shouldè makin melodie:
Now there n'as hour in all the daie or night,
Whan he was there as no man might him here,
That he ne saied, O lovesome ladie bright!
How have ye farin sins that ye were there?
Welcome iwis, mine ownè ladie dere!
But welawaie! all this n'as but a mase;
Fortune his love entendid but to glase.
The lettirs eke that she of oldè time
Had him isent he would alonè irede
An hundrid sithe atwixtin none and prime,
Refiguring her shape and womanhede
Within his hert, and every worde and dede
That passid was; and thus he drove to' an ende
The ferthè day, and thennis wolde he wende;
And saidè, Levè brothir Pindarus!
Intendist thou that we shall here byleve
Til Sarpedon wol forth conveyin us?
Yet were it fairir that we toke our leve;
For Godd'is love let us now sone at eve
Our levè take, and homwarde let us tourne,
For trewely I n'il nat thus sojourne.
Pandare answerid, Be we comin hither
To fetchin fire and rennin home again?
God helpe me so I can nat tellin whither
We mightin gone, if I shall sothly saine,
There any wight is of us more faine
Than Sarpedon; and if we hennis hie
Thus sodainly I holde it vilanie;
Sith that we seydin we wouldin byleve
With him a weke, and now thus sodainly
The ferthè day to take of him our leve,
He wouldè wondrin on it trewely:
Let us holde forth our purpose fermely,
And sens that ye behightin him to' abide
Holde forwarde now, and aftir let us ride.

This Pandarus with mochil pine and wo
Made him to dwel; and at the wek'is ende
Of Sarpedon thei toke ther leve to go,
And on ther way they spedin hem to wende.
(Quod Troilus) Now, Lorde, me gracè sende
That I maie findin at mine home-comming
Creseide comin, and therwith gan he sing.
Ye halif wodè thought ywis Pandare,
And to him selfe ful softily he seide,
God wote refroidin may this hottè fare
Er Calcas sendè Troilus Creseide:
But nethèlesse he japid thus, and seide,
And swore iwis, his hert him wel behight
She wouldin come as sone as er she might.
Whan thei unto the paleis were icomen
Of Troilus thei doun of horse alight,
And to the chambre ther waie have thei nommen,
And unto timè that it gan to night
Thei spekin of Creseide the lady bright,
And aftir this, whan that 'hem bothe leste,
Thei spede 'hem fro the suppir unto rest.
On morow' as sone as day began to clere
This Troilus gan of his slepe to' abreide,
And to Pandarus his owne brothir dere,
For love of God, ful pitously he seide,
As go we sene the paleis of Creseide,
For sens we yet maie have none othir fest
So let us sene her paleis at the lest!
And therwithal his meinè for to blende
A cause he fonde into the toun to go,
And to Creseid'is paleis they gone wende;
But Lorde! this sely Troilus was wo,
Him thought his sorouful hert brast atwo,
For when he saw her doris sperrid all
Wel nigh for sorow' adoun he gan to fall.
Therwith when he was ware, and gan behold
How shet was every window of the place,
As frost him thought his hert began to cold,
For whiche with chaungid dedly palè face
Withoutin worde he forth by gan to pace,
And as God would he gan so fast to ride
That no wight of his countinaunce aspide.
Than saide he thus; O paleis desolate!
O house of houss whilom best ydight!
O paleis empty and disconsolate!
O thou lanterne, of which queint is the light!
O paleis whilom day, that now art night!
Wel oughtist thou to sal and I to die
Sens she is went that wont was us to gie.
O paleis whilom croune of houss al!
Enluminid with sunne of alle blisse,
O ring, of whiche the rubie is out fall!
O cause of wo that cause hast ben of blisse!
Yet sens I may no bet saine would I kisse
Thy coldè doris, durst I for this routè;
And farwel shrine of whiche the saint is out!
Therwith he cast on Pandarus his eie
With chaungid face, and pitous to beholde,
And whan he might his time aright aspie
Aie as he rode to Pandarus he tolde
His newe sorow, and eke his joyis olde,
So pitously, and with so ded an hewe,
That every wight might on his sorow rewe.

Fro thinnis forth he ridith up and doune,
And every thing came him to remembraance
As he rode forth by placis of the toune
In whiche he whilom had all his plesaunce;
Lo! yondir saw I mine owne lady daunce,
And in that temple with her eyin clere
Me captive caught firſt my right lady dere:
And yondir have I herde ful luſtily
My dere hert Creſeide laugh, and yondir plaie
Sawe I her onis eke ful blisfully,
And yondir onis to me gan ſhe saie,
Now, gode ſwete! lovith me wel I you praye;
And yonde ſo godely gan ſhe me beholde
That to the deth mine hert is to her holde:
And at the cornir in the yondir houſe
Herde I mine aldirleviſt lady dere
So womanly with voice melodiouſe
Singin ſo wel, ſo godely and ſo clere,
That in my ſoule yet me thinkith I here
The blisful ſowne, and in that yondir place
My lady firſt me toke unto her grace.
Than thought he thus, O blisfull Lorde Cupide!
Whan I the proceſſe have in memorie
How thou me haſt weried on every ſide
Men might a boke make of it like a ſtorie;
What nede is the to ſeke on me victorie
Sens I am thine and wholly at thy will?
What joy haſt thou thine ownè folke to ſpill?
Wel haſt thou, Lorde, iwroke on me thine ire;
Thou mighty God, and dredful for to greve;
Now mercy, Lorde! thou woſt wel I deſire
Thy grace moſte of allè luſtis leve,
And live and die I wol in thy beleve,
For whiche I ne' aſke in guerdon but a bone,
That thou Creſeide aien me ſendè ſone.
Diſtrainin her hert as faſt to returne
As thou doeſt mine to longin her to ſe,
Than wote I wel that ſhe n'il nat ſojourne:
Now bliſful Lorde! ſo cruil thou ne be
Unto the blode of Troie, I praiè the,
As Juno was unto the blode Thebane,
For whiche the folke of Thebis caught ther bane.
And aftir this he to the yatis wente
Ther as Creſeide out rode a full gode paas,
And up and doun there made he many' a wente,
And to him ſelfe ful oft he ſaid, Alas!
Fro hennis rode my bliſſe and my ſolas:
As wouldè bliſful God now ſor his joie
I might her ſene ayen comin to Troie!
And to the yondir hil I gan her gide,
Alas! and there I toke of her my leve,
And yonde I ſaw her to her fathir ride,
For ſorow of whiche mine hert ſhal to cleve,
And hithir home I came whan it was eve,
And here I dwel, out caſt from allè joie,
And ſhal, til I maie ſene her eſte in Troie.
And of him ſelfe imaginid he ofte
To ben defaitid, pale, and woxin leſſe
Than he was wonte, and that men ſaidin ſofte
What may it be? who can the ſothè geſſe
Why Troilus hath al this hevineſſe?
And al this n'as but his melancolie,
That he had of him ſelfe ſuche fantaſie.
Another time imaginin he would
That every wight that went by the wey
Had of him routhe, and that thei ſainè ſhould
I am right ſory Troilus wol dey;
And thus he drove a daie yet forth or twey,
As ye have herde: ſuche life gan he to lede
As he that ſtodè betwixin hope and drede:
For which him likid in his ſongis ſhewe
Th' encheſon of his wo as he beſt might,
And made a ſonge of wordis but a fewe,
Somwhat his wofull hertè for to light,
And whan he was from every mann's ſight
With ſoftè voice he of his lady dere,
That abſent was, gan ſing as ye maie here:
O ſterre! of which I loſt have all the light,
With hertè ſore wel ought I to bewaile
That evir derke in turment, night by night,
Towarde my deth with winde I ſtere and ſaile,
For whiche the tennith night if that I faile
The giding of thy bemis bright an houre
My ſhip and me Carybdis woll devoure.
This ſongè when he thus ſongin had ſone
He ſil aien into his ſighis olde,
And every night, as was his wont to done,
He ſtodè the bright monè to beholde,
And al his ſorowe he to the mone tolde,
And ſaid, Iwis whan thou art hornid newe
I ſhal be glad if al the world be trewe.
I ſaw thine hornis olde eke by that morow
Whan hennis rode my bright lady dere,
That cauſe is of my turment and my ſorow,
For whichè, o bright Lucina the clere!
For love of God ren faſt about thy ſphere,
For whan thine hornis newe ginnin to ſpring
Than ſhal ſhe come that maie my bliſſe ybring.
The daie is more and lengir every night
Than thei ben wont to be, thim thoughtè tho,
And that the ſunnè went his courſe unright
By lengir waie than it was wonte to go,
And ſaid, Iwis I drede me evirmo
The ſunn'is ſonne Phaeton be on live,
And that his fathir's carre amiſſe he drive.
Upon the wallis faſt eke would he walke,
And on the Grekis hoſt he would yſe,
And to him ſelfe right thus he would ytalke;
Lo! yondir is mine owne lady fre,
Or ellis yondir there the tentis be,
And thence comith this ayre that is ſo ſote,
That in my ſoule I fele it doth me bote.
And hardily this winde that more and more
Thus ſtoundemele encreſith in my face
Is of my ladies depè ſighis fore;
I preve it thus, for in none othir ſpace
Of al this toun, ſave onely in this place,
Fele I no winde that ſounith ſo like paine,
It ſaith Alas! why twinid be we twaine?
This longè time he drivith forth right thus,
Til fully paſſid was the ninthè night,
And aie beſide him was this Pandarus,
That beſily did allè his full might
Him to comfort and make his hertè light,
Yeving him hope alway the tenthè morow
That ſhe ſhal comen and ſtinein al his ſorow.

Upon that othir side eke was Creseide
With women fewe among the Grekis strong,
For whiche ful oft a day Alas! she seide,
That I was borne! wel maie mine hertè long
Aftir my deth, for now live I to long;
Alas! and I ne may it not amende,
For now is worse than evir yet I wende.
My father n'il for nothing do me grace
To gone ayen for aught I can him queme,
And if so be that I my termè pace
My Troilus, alas! shal in his hert deme
That I am false, and so it maie wel seme;
Thus shal I have unthonke on every side:
That I was borne so welaway the tide!
And if that I me put in jeopardie
To stele awaie by night, and it befal
That I be caught I shal be holde a spie,
Or ellis, lo: this drede I most of al,
If in the hondis of some wretche I fal
I n'am but lost, al be mine hertè trewe:
Now mighty God thou on my sorow rewe!
Ful pale iwoxin was her brightè face,
Her limmis lene, as she that al the daie
Stode whan she durst, and lokid on the place
There she was borne, and she had dwellid aye;
And al the night weping, alas! she laie;
And thus dispeirid out of allè cure
She lad her life this sorousull creture.
Ful oft a daie she sighed eke for distresse,
And in her selfe she went aie purtraying
Of Troilus the gretè worthinesse,
And al his godely wordis recording
Sens firste that daie her love began to spring;
And thus she sette her wofull hert afire
Through remembraunce of that she gan desire.
In all this world there n'is so cruil hert
That her had herd complainin her sorow
That n'old have wepin for her painis smert;
So tendirly she wept both eve and morow
Her nedid not no teres for to borow;
And this was yet the worst of all her paine,
Ther was no wight to whom she durst complaine.
Ful rewfully she lokid upon Troie,
Behelde the touris high and eke the hallis;
Alas! (quod she) the plesaunce and the joie,
The whiche that now al turned into gal is,
Have I had oftin within yondir wallis!
O Troilus! what doest thou now? she seide;
Lord, whethir thou yet think upon Creseide!
Alas! that I ne' had trowed on your lote,
And went with you, as ye me redde er this,
Than had I now not sighid halfe so sore:
Who might have said that I had don amis
To stele awaie with suche one as he is?
But al to late comith the leçuarie
Whan men the corse unto the gravè carie.
To late is now to speke of that matere;
Prudence, alas! one of thine eyin thre
Me lackid alway er that I came here,
For on time passid wel remembrid me,
And present time eke could I wel yse,
But future time, er I was in the snare,
Could I not sene, that causith now my care.

But nathèlesse, betide what may betide,
I shal to morow' at night, by est or west,
Out of this hoste stele on some manir side,
And gon with Troilus where as him lest;
This purpose wol I holde, and this is best;
No force of wickid tongis jonglerie,
For er on love have wretchis had envie:
For who so wol of every worde take hede,
Or rulin him by every wight'is wit,
Ne shal he nevir thrivin out of drede,
For that that some men blamin ever yet
Lo othir manir folke commendin it;
And as for me, for al suche variaunce
Felicite clepe I my suffisaunce.
For whiche, withoutin any wordis mo,
To Troie I wol, as for conclusioun.
But God it wote er fully monthis two
She was ful ferre fro that entencioun,
For bothè Troilus and Troi toun
Shall knotèlesse throughout her hertè slide,
For she wol take a purpose for to' abide.
This Diomede of whom I you tel gan,
Goth now within himselfe aie arguing,
With al the sleight and al that er he can,
How he maie best with shortist tarying
Into his nette Creseid'is hert bring;
To this entente he couthè nevir fine;
To fishin her he laide out hoke and line.
But nathèlesse wel in his hert he thoughe
That she n'as nat without a love in Troie,
For nevir sithin he her thennis brought
Ne couthe he sene her laugh or makin joie;
He n'ist how best her hert for to acoie,
But for t' assey he said nought it ne greveth,
For *He that naught assayith naught atcheveth.*
Yet said he to him selfe upon a night,
Now am I nat a fole that wote wel howe
Her woe is for love of anothir wight
And herupon to gon assaie her nowe?
I maie well wete it n'il nat ben my prowe,
For wisè folke in bokis it expresse,
Men shal nat wowe a wight in bevinesse.
But who so might ywinnin suche a floure
Fro him for whom she mournith night and daie
He might wel saine he were a conqueroure;
And right anone, as he that bold was aie,
Thought in his hert, happin what happin may,
Al should I die I wol her hertè seche,
I shal no more lesin but my speche.
This Diomede, as bokis us declare,
Was in his nedis prest and corageous,
With sterne voice, and mighty limmis square,
Hardy and testife, strong and chevalrous,
Of dedis like his fathir Tydeus;
And some men saine he was of tongè large,
And heire he was of Caledon and Arge.
Creseidè mene ywas of her stature,
Therto of shape, of face, and eke of chere,
There ne mightin ben no fairir creture;
And oftin timis this was her manere
To gone itresid with her heris clere
Doun by her colere, at her backe behinde,
Which with a threde of gold she would binde.

And ſave her bowis joynedin iferer
There n'as no lacke in aught I can eſpien;
But for to ſpekin of her eyin clere,
Lo! truily thei writtin that her ſeien
That paradis ſtode formed in her eien,
And with her richè beauty evirmore
Strove love in her aie which of 'hem was more.

She ſobrè was, ſimplè, and wiſt withall,
The beſt inoriſhid eke that might be,
And godely of her ſpeche in generall,
Charitable, eſtately, luſty', and frè,
Ne nevirmore ne lackid her pite,
Tendrehertid, and fliding of corage,
But truily I can nat tel her age.

And Troilus wel woxin was in hight,
And complete, formid by proporcioun
So wel, that Kinde it naught amendin might,
Yong, freſh, and ſtrong, and hardy as lioun,
And trewe as ſtele in eche condicioun,
One of the beſt entetchid creature
That is or ſhal while that the world maie dure.

And certainly in ſtory it is fonde
That Troilus was nevir to no wight,
As in his time, in no dègre ſeconde
In daring do that longith to a knight;
Al might a giaunt paſſin him of might
His hert aie with the firſt and with the beſt
Stode peregall to dare done what him leſt.

But for to tellin forthe of Diomede
It fil, that aftir on the tennith daie
Sens that Creſeide out of the cite yede
This Diomede, as freſh as braunche in Maie,
Came to the tentè there as Calchas laie,
And fainid him with Calchas have to done,
But what he mente I ſhal you tellin ſone.

Creſeidè, at ſhorte wordis for to tel,
Welcomid him, and doun him by her ſette,
And he was ethe inough to makin dwel;
And aftir this, withoutin longè lette,
The ſpicis and the wine men forth 'hem fette,
And forthe thei ſpeke of this and that ifere,
As frendis done, of whiche ſome ſhall ye here.

He gan firſt fallin of the warre in ſpeche
Betwixin them and the folke of Troie toun,
And of th' aſſiege he gan eke her beſeche
To tellin him what was her opinioun;
Fro that demaunde he ſo diſcendith doun
To aſkin her if that her ſtraungè thought
The Grekis giſe and werkis that thei wrought,

And why her fathir taryith ſo long
To weddin her unto ſome worthy wight?
Creſeidè, that was in her painis ſtrong
For love of Troilus her ownè knight,
So ferforth as ſhe conning had or might
Anſwerde him tho, but as of his entente
It ſemid that ſhe ne wiſt what he mente.

But nathèleſſe this ilkè Diomede
Gan on him ſelfe aſſure, and thus he ſeide;
If I aright have taken on you hede
Me thinkith thus, o lady mine Creſeide!
That ſens I firſt hond on your bridil leide,
When I out came of Troiè by the morow,
Ne might I nevir ſene you but in ſorow.

I can nat ſain what maie the cauſè be,
But if for love of ſome Trojan it were,
The whiche right ſore wouldin athinkin me,
That ye for any wight that dwellith there
Shulden yſpil a quartir of a tere,
Or pitouſly your ſelvin ſo begile,
For dredèleſſe it is nat worthe the while.

The folke of Troie, as who ſaith al and ſome,
In priſon ben, as you your ſelvin ſe,
Fro thennis ſhal nat one on livè come
For al the golde atwixin ſunne and ſe;
Truſtith wel this, and undirſtondith me,
There ſhal nat one to mercy gone on live,
Al were he lord of worldis twiſè five.

Such wrech on them for fetching of Heleine
There ſhal be take, er that we hennis wende,
That Manes, whiche that goddis ben of Peine,
Shal ben agaſt that Grekis wol 'hem ſhende;
And men ſhal drede unto the world's ende
From hennis forthe to raviſhe any quene,
So cruil ſhal our wreche on them be ſene.

And but if Calchas led us with *ambages*,
That is to ſaine, with double wordis ſlie,
Suche as men clepen a word with two viſages,
Ye ſhal wel knowin that I do nat lie,
And al this thing right ſene it with your eie,
And that anon, ye n'il nat trowe how ſone;
Now takith hede, for it is for to done.

What! wenin ye that your wife fathir would
Have yevin Antenor for you anon
If he ne wiſtè that the cite ſhould
Diſtroyid ben? Why, nay: ſo mote I gone
He knew ful wel there ſhal nat ſcapin one
That Trojan is, and for the gretè fere
He durſt nat that ye dwellid lengir there.

What wol ye more, o loveſome lady dere!
Let Troie and Trojans fro your hertè paſſe;
Drive out the bittir hope, and make gode chere,
And clepe ayen the beaute of your face,
That ye with faltè teris ſo deface,
For Troie is brought in ſuche a jeopardie
That it to ſave is now no remedie.

And thinkith wel ye ſhal in Grekis finde
A love more parfite, er that it be night,
Than any Trojan is, and morè kinde,
And bet to ſervin you wol don his might;
And if that ye vouchſafe, my lady bright!
I wol ben he to ſervin you my ſelve,
Ye, levir than be lorde of Grecis twelve.

And with that word he gan to waxin red,
And in his ſpeche a litil while he quoke,
And caſt aſide a litil with his hed,
And ſtinte a while, and aftirwarde he woke,
And ſobrely on her he threwe his loke,
And ſaid, I am, al be' it to you no joie,
As gentle' a man as any wight in Troie:

For if my fathir Tydeus, he ſeide,
Ilivid had, tho I had ben er this
Of Calidony' and Arge a king, Creſeide,
And ſo hope I that I ſhal yet iwis,
But he was ſlaine, alas! the more harm is,
Unhappily at Thebis al to rathe,
Polynices and many' a man to ſcathe.

But, herté mine! sithe that I am your man,
And ye ben the first of whom I seche grace,
To servin you as hertely as I can,
And evir shal while I to live have space,
So that er I depart out of this place
Ye wol me graunten that I may to morow
At bettir laisir tell you of my sorow.

What should I tell his wordis that he seide?
He spake inough for o daie at the mest;
It previth wel he spake so that Creseide
Grauntid on the morow at his requeste
Forthy to spekin with him at the leste,
So that he n'olde spekin of suche matere,
And thus she to him said, as ye mowe here,

As she that had her hert on Troilus
So hast yset that none might it arace,
And straungely she spake, and seidè thus:
O Diomede! I love that ilkè place
There I was borne, and Jovis of thy grace
Delivre' it sone of al that doth it care:
God for thy might so leve it wel to fare!

That Grekis wold ther wrath on Troyè wreke,
If that thei might, I know it wel iwis;
But it shal naught befallin as ye speke,
And God toforne; and farthir ovir this
I wote, my fathir wise and redy is,
And that he me hath bought, as ye me tolde,
So dere I am to him the more yholde.

That Grekis ben of high condicioun
I wote eke well, but certaine men shall finde
As worthy folkè within Troiè toun,
As conning, as parfite, and eke as kinde,
As ben betwixin Orcades and Inde;
And that ye couldin wel your lady serve
I trowe eke wel, her thonke for to deserve.

But as to speke of love, iwis, she seide,
I had a lorde to whom I weddid was,
The whose mine hert was al til that he deide,
And othir love, as helpe me now Pallas,
There in mine hert ne is ne nevir was;
And that ye ben of noble' and high kinrede
I have wel herde it tellin out of drede.

And that doth me to have so grete a wonder
That ye wol scornin any woman so;
Eke God wote love and I ben fer asonder;
I am disposid bet, so mote I go,
Unto my deth to plaine and makin wo;
What I shal aftir done I can nat saie,
But truily as yet me lifte nat plaie.

Mine hert is now in tribulacioun,
And ye in armis besy daie by daie;
Hereaftir when ye wonnin have the toun
Paravintur than so it happin maie
That whan I se that I nevir ere saie
Than wol I werke that I nevir ere wrought;
This word to you inough suffisin ought.

To morow eke wol I speke with you saine,
So that ye touchin nought of this matere,
And whan you list ye maie come here againe;
And er ye gon thus muche I saie you here,
As helpe me Pallas with her heris clere,
Yf that I should of any Greke have routhe
It should ybe yours folwin by my trouthe.

I saie nat therfore that I wol you love,
Ne saie nat naie, but, in conclusioun,
I mene wel, by God that sit above;
And therwithal she cast her eyin doun,
And gan to sigh, and saide, O Troyè toune!
Yet bidde I God in quiet and in rest
I maie the sene, or do mine hertè brest.

But in effecte, and shortely for to saie,
This Diomede al freshly newe againe
Gan preasin on, and fast her mercy praie;
And aftir this, the sothè for to saine,
Her glove he toke, of which he was ful faine,
And, finally, whan it was woxin eve,
And al was well, he rose and toke his leve.

The bright Venus folowid and aie taught
The waie there brodè Phœbus doune alight
And Cytherea her chare-horse o'r raught
To whirle into the Lioun if she might,
And Signifer his candils shewith bright,
Whan that Creseidè unto her bed wente
Within her fathir'is faire brightè tente,

Retourning in her soule aie up and doun
The wordis of this sodaine Diomede,
His gret estate, and peril of the toun,
And that she was alone, and haddè nede
Of frendis helpe, and thus began to drede
The cause why, the sothè for to tell,
That she toke fully purpose for to dwell.

The morow came, and, gostly for to speke,
This Diomede is come unto Creseide;
And, shortly, lest that ye my talè breke,
So wel he for himselfin spake and seide
That al her sighis sore adoun he leide;
And, finally, the sothè for to saine,
He rest her of the grete of alle her pain.

And aftir this the story tellith us
That she unto him yave the faire baie stede
The whiche she onis wan of Troilus,
And eke a broche (and that was litil nede)
That Troilus was, she yave this Diomede,
And eke the bet from sorowe' him to releve
She made him were a pencell of her sleve.

I finde eke in the story ellis where,
Whan through the body hurt was Diomede,
Of Troilus tho wepte she many' a tere,
Whan that she saw his widè woundis blede,
And that she toke to kepin him gode hede,
And for to helin him of his woundis smerte:
Men saine, I n'ot, that she yeve him her herte.

But truily the story tellith us
There madin nevir woman morè wo
Than she whan that she falsid Troilus;
She saide Alas! for now is clene ago
My name in trouthe of love for evirmo,
For I have falsid one the gentillest
That ever was, and one the worthiest.

Alas! of me unto the world'is ende
Shall neithir ben iwrittin or isong
No gode worde, for these bokis woll me shende;
Irollid shall I ben on many' a tong,
Throughout the world my bell shall be yrong,
And women moste woll hatin me of all;
Alas that soche a cass me should befall!

Thei woll fain, in as moche as in me is
I have 'hem doen diſhonour, welawaie!
All be I not the firſt that did amis,
What helpith that to doen my blame awaie?
But ſeths I ſe there is no bettir waie,
And that to late is now for me to rue,
To Diomede I woll algate be true.

But, Troilus, ſens I no bettir maie,
And ſens that thus departin ye and I,
Yet praie I God ſo yeve you right gode daie,
As for the gentilliſt knight truily
That er I ſawe to ſervin faithfully,
And beſt can aie his ladie's honour kepe,
(And with that worde ſhe braſt anon to wepe.)

And certis you ne hatin ſhall I never,
And frend'is love that ſhall ye have of me,
And my gode worde, all ſhould I livin ever;
And truily I would right ſorie be
For to ſein you in adverſite;
And giltileſſe I wot well I you leve;
And all ſhall paſſe, and thus take I my leve;

But truily how long it was bitwene
That ſhe forſoke him for this Diomede
There is none auĉthour tellith it I wene,
Take every man now to his bokis hede
He ſhall no terme findin out of drede,
For though that he began to wowe her ſone,
Er he her wan yet was there more to done.

Ne me ne liſt this ſelie woman chide
Ferthir than that the ſtorie woll deviſe;
Her name, alas! is publiſhid ſo wide
That for her gilt it ought inough ſuffiſe;
And if I might excuſe her in ſome wiſe,
For ſhe ſo ſorie was for her untrouthe,
Iwis I would excuſe her yet for routhe.

This Troilus, as I before have told,
Thus drivith forth as wel as he hath might,
But oftin was his hertè hote and cold,
And namily that ilkè ninithe night
Whiche on the morowe ſhe had him behight
To come ayen; God wote full little reſt
Had he that night; nothing to ſlepe him leſt.

The lauril-crounid Phœbus with his hete
Gan in his courſe aie upward as he went
To warme of the eſt ſe the wavis wete,
And Circe'is doughtir ſong with freſhe entent,
Whan Troilus his Pandare aftir ſent,
And on the wallis of the toune thei pleide,
To loke if thei can ſene aught of Creſeide;

Till it was none thei ſtodin for to ſe
Who that there came, and every manir wight
That came fro ferre thei ſaidin it was ſhe,
Till that thei couldin knowin him aright:
Now was his hertè dull, now was it light;
And thus bejapid ſtodin for to ſtare
About naught this Troilus and Pandare.

To Pandarus this Troilus tho ſeide;
For aught I wot before none ſikirly
Into this toune ne comith not Creſeide,
She hath inough to doin hardily
To twinnin from her fathir, ſo trowe I;
Her oldè fathir woll yet make her dine
Er that ſhe go; God yeve his herte pine!

Pandare anſwerd, it may wel ben certain
And forthy let us dine, I the beſeche,
And aftir none than maiſt thou come again:
And home thei go withoutin morè ſpeche,
And comin ayen; but long maie thei ſeche
Er that thei findin that thei aftir gape;
Fortune 'hem bothe ythinkith for to jape.

(Quod Troilus) I ſe well now that ſhe
Is taryid with her old fathir ſo
That er ſhe come it woll nigh evin be;
Come forthe, I woll unto the yatè go,
Theſe portirs ben unkonning evirmo,
And I woll doen 'hem holdin up the yate
As naught ne were, although ſhe comin late.

The daie goth faſt, and after that came eve,
And yet came not to Troilus Creſeide:
He lokith forth by hedge, by tre, by greve,
And ferre his hedde ovir the wall he leide,
And at the laſt he tournid him, and ſeide,
By God I wote her mening now, Pandare;
Almoſte iwis all newe was all my care.

Now doutileſs this ladie can her gode;
I wote ſhe comith riding privily;
I commendin her wiſedome by mine hode;
She woll nat makin peple nicily
Gaure on her whan ſhe cometh, but ſoftily
By night into the toune ſhe thinkith ride,
And, dere brothir! thinke nat long to abide.

We have naught ellis for to doen iwis;
And Pandarus, now wilt thou trowin me,
Have here my trouth I ſe her; yond ſhe is:
Hevé up thine eyin man; maieſt thou nat ſe?
Pandare anſwerid, Naie, ſo mote I the;
All wrong by God: what ſaiſt thou man? wher art?
That I ſe yonde afarre n'is but a carte.

Alas! thou ſaieſt right ſothe, (quod Troilus)
But hardily it is not all for nought
That in mine herte I now rejoicè thus;
It is ayenſt ſome gode: I have a thought,
N'ot I nat how, but ſens that I was wrought
Ne felt I ſoche a comfort dare I ſaie;
She cometh to night, my life that durſt I lay.

Pandare anſwerde, It maie be well inough;
And helde with him of all that er he ſaied,
But in his herte he thought, and ſoft he lough,
And to himſelf full ſobirly he ſaied,
From haſilwodde, there Joly Robin plaied,
Shall come all that that thou abidiſt here;
Ye, farwell all the ſnowe of fernè yere.

The wardein of the yatis gan to call
The folke which that without the yatis were,
And badde 'hem drivin in their beſtis all,
Or all the night thei muſt bylevin there;
And ferre within the night, with many' a tere
This Troilus gan homward for to ride,
For well he ſeeth it helpith nat to' abide.

But nathèleſſe he gladdid him in this,
He thought he miſaccomptid had his daie,
And ſaied, I underſtande have all amis,
For thilkè night I laſt Creſeidè ſaie
She ſaied I ſhall ben here, if that I maie,
Er that the mone, o my dere hertè ſwete!
The Lion paſſe out of this Ariete:

For whiche ſhe maie yet hold all her beheſt;
And on the morowe to the yate he went,
And up and doune, by weſt and eke by eſt,
Upon the wallis made he many' a went;
But al for naught; his hope alway him blent,
For which at night in ſorow and ſighes ſore
He went him home withoutin any more.

This hope all clene out of his hertè fledde,
He ne' hath wheron now lengir for to hong;
But for the pain him thought his hertè bledd,
So wer his throwis ſharp, and wondir ſtrong,
For whan he ſawe that ſhe abode ſo long
He ne wiſt what he judgin of it might;
Sens ſhe hath brokin that ſhe him behight.

The thirde, the fourth, the fifte, and the ſixt, daie
Aftir tho dayis tenne of whiche I told,
Betwixin hope and drede his hertè laie,
Yet ſomwhat truſting on her heſtis old;
But whan he ſawe ſhe n'olde her termis hold
He can now ſene none othir remedie
But for to ſhapin him ſone for to die.

Therwith the wickid ſpirit, God us bleſſe!
Whiche that men clepin the wode Jalouſie,
Gan in him crepe in all this hevineſſe,
For whiche bicauſe he wouldin ſonè die
He n'ete ne dronke for his melancolie,
And eke from every companie he fledde;
This was the life that all this time he ledde.

He ſo defaite was that no manir man
Unnethis him might knowin there he went,
So was he lene and therto pale and wan,
And feble, that he walkith by potent,
And with his ire he thus himſelfin ſhent;
But whoſo aſkid him wherof him ſmerte,
He ſaied his harme was all about his herte.

Priam full oft, and eke his mothir dere,
His bretherne and his ſuſtrin, gan him frain
Why he ſo woſull was in all his chere,
And what thing was the cauſe of al his pain?
But all for naught; he n'olde his cauſè plain,
But ſaied he felt a grevous maladie
About his herte, and fain he wouldè die.

So on a daie he laie him doune to ſlepe,
And ſo biſell it that in ſlepe him thought
That in a foreſt faſt he walked to wepe
For love of her that him theſe painis wrought,
And up and doune as he that foreſt ſought
He met he ſawe a bore with tuſkis grete
That ſlept ayeniſt the bright ſunn'is hete;

And by this bore, faſt in her armis fold,
Laie kiſſing aie his ladie bright Creſeide,
For ſorowe' of whiche, whan he it gan behold,
And for diſpite, out of his ſlepe he breide,
And loude he cried on Pandarus, and ſeide,
O Pandarus! now knowe I crop and rote
I n'am but dedde; there n'is none othir bote.

My ladie bright, Creſeide, hath me betraide,
In whom I truſtid moſte of any wight;
She elliſwhere hath now her hert apaied;
The blisfull goddis thorough ther grete might
Have in my dreme iſhewid it full right;
Thus in my dreme Creſeide have I beholde,
And all this thing to Pandarus he tolde.

O my Creſeide! alas! what ſubtilte,
What newè luſt, what beaute, what ſcience,
What wrathe of juſte cauſe have ye unto me?
What gilt of me, what fell experience,
Hath ſro me rafte, alas! thine advertence?
O truſt! o faithe! quod he', o depe aſſuraunce!
Who hath me rafte Creſeide, all my pleſaunce?

Alas! why let I her from hennis go?
For whiche well nigh out of my wit I breide;
Who ſhall now trowe on any othis mo?
God wote I wende, o ladie bright Creſeide!
That every worde was goſpell that ye ſeide:
But who maie bet begile if that him liſt,
Than he on whom men wenin beſt to triſt?

What ſhall I doen, my Pandarus? alas!
I felin now ſo ſharpe a newè pain,
Sens that there is no remedy' in this caas,
That bet were it I with mine hondis twain
My ſelvin ſlowe than alwaie thus to plain,
For through the deth my wo ſhuld have an ende,
There every daie with life my ſelf I ſhende.

Pandare anſwerde and ſaid, Alas the while
That I was borne! Have I nat ſaied er this
'That dremis many' a manir man begile?
And why? for folke expoundin 'hem amis:
How darſt thou ſain that falſe thy ladie is
For any dreme? right for thine owne drede
Let be this thought; thou canſt no dremis rede.

Paravinture there thou dremeſt of this bore
It maie ſo be that it maie ſignifie
Her fathir, whiche that old is and eke hore,
Ayen the ſunne lyith on poinct to die,
And ſhe for ſorowe ginnith wepe and crie,
And kiſſith him, there he lieth on the ground;
Thus ſhuldiſt thou thy dreme aright expound.

How might I than doin (quod Troilus)
To knowe of this, yea, were nevir ſo lite?
Now ſaieſt thou wiſely, (quod this Pandarus)
My redy is this, ſens thou canſt well endite,
That haſtily a lettir thou her write,
Thorough which thou ſhalt wel bringin about
To knowe a ſoth of that thou art in dout.

And ſe now why; for this I dare well ſain,
That if ſo is that ſhe untrue ybe
I can not trowe that ſhe woll write again;
And if ſhe write thou ſhalt full ſone iſe
As whethir ſhe hath any liberte
To come ayen, or ellis in ſome clauſe
If ſhe be let ſhe wol aſſigne a cauſe.

Thou haſt not writtin to her ſens ſhe went,
Nor ſhe to the; and this I durſt wele laie,
There maie ſoche cauſè ben in her entent
That hardily thou wolt thy ſelvin ſaie
That her abode the beſt is for you twaie:
Now write her than, and thou ſhalt ſelè ſone
A ſoth of all; there is no more to done.

Acordid ben to this concluſioun,
And that anon, theſe ilke lordis two,
And haſtily ſat Troilus adoun,
And rollith in his hertè to and fro
How he maie beſt diſcrivin her his wo,
And to Creſeidè his owne ladie dere
He wrote right thus, and ſaid as ye maie here.

The copie of the letter.

Right fresh flour, whose I have aye ben and shall,
Withoutin part of ellisswhere servise,
With herte and bodie, life, lust, thought, and all,
I wofull wight, in every humble wise
That tong can tell or hertè maie devise,
As oft as mattir occupyith place,
Me recommaunde unto your noble grace.
Likith it you to wetin, swetè herte!
As ye well knowin, how long time agon
That ye me left in aspre painis smerte,
Whan that ye wentin, of whiche yet bote non
Have I non had, but evir worse bigon
Fro daie to daie am I, and so mote dwell
While it you list, of wele and wo my well.
For whiche to you with dredefull herte true
I write, as he that sorowe driveth to write,
My wo, that every houre encresith newe,
Complaining as I dare or can endite;
And that defacid is that maie ye wite
The teris which that from mine eyin rain,
That wuldin speke if that thei durst and plain.
You first beseche I that your eyin clere
To loke on this defoulid ye nat hold,
And ore all this that ye my ladie dere
Woll vouchsafin this lettir to behold,
And by the cause eke of my caris cold,
That slaeth my wit, if aught amis me sterte
Foryevith it me, mine owne swetè herte!
If any servaunt durst or ought of right
Upon his ladie pitously complain,
Than wene I that I ought to be that wight,
Considrid this, that ye these monthis twain
Have taried there ye saidin, sothe to fain,
But tenne dayis ye n'olde in hoste sojourne,
But in two monethis yet ye not retourne.
But for as moche as me mote nedis like
All that you list I dare nat planin more,
But humbly with forowfull sighis sike
You write I mine unrestie forowes sore,
Fro daie to daie desiring evirmore
To knowin fully, if your will it were,
How ye have fared and don while ye be there;
The whose welfare and hele eke God encrese
In honour soche, that upward in degre
It growe alwaie, so that it nevir cese;
Right as your herte aie can, my ladie fre,
Devise, I praie to God so mote it be,
And graunt it that ye sone upon me rewe,
As wisely as in all I'am to you true.
And if you likith knewin of the fare
Of me, whose wo there maie no wight discrive,
I can no more, but chest of every care,
At writing of this lettir I'am on live,
All redy out of my wofull ghost to drive,
Whiche I delaie and holde him yet in honde
Upon the sight of mattir of your sonde.
Mine eyin two, in vain with whiche I se,
Of sorowfull teres salt arn woxin wellis,
My song in plaint of mine adversite,
My gode in harme, mine ese eke woxin hel is,
My joie in wo: I can sey now nought ellis
But tournid is, for whiche my life I warie,
Every joie or ese in his contrarie:
Which with your coming home ayen to Troy
Ye maie redresse, and more a thousande sithe
Than er I had encressin in me joie,
For was there nevir hertè yet so blythe
To have his life as I shall ben as swithe
As I you se, and though no manir routhe
Can mevin you, yet thinkith on your trouthe.
And if so be my gilt hath deth deserved,
Or if you list no more upon me se,
In guerdon yet of that I have you served
Beseche I you, mine ownè ladie fre
That hereupon you wouldin write to me
For love of Jovis, my right lodè sterre,
That deth maie make an end of al my werre.
If othir cause aught doeth you for to dwel,
That with your lettir ye me reconfort,
For though to me your absence is an hell,
With pacience I woll my wo comfort,
And with your letter' of hope I woll disport:
Now writith, swete! and let me thus nat plain;
With hope or deth delivereth me fro pain.
Iwis, mine ownè derè hertè true!
I wot that whan ye next upon me se,
So lost have I mine hele and eke mine hewe,
Creseidè shall not conne tho knowin me;
Iwis, mine hert'is daie, my ladie fre!
So thurstith aie mine hertè to behold
Your beaute that unneth my life I hold.
I saie no more, all have I for to sey
To you well more than that I tellin maie;
But whethir that ye doe me live or dey
Yet praie I God so yeve you right gode daie:
And farith well, thou godely faire freshe Maie!
As ye that life or deth me maie commaunde,
And to your trouth aie I me recommaunde,
With helè soche, that but ye yevin me
The samin hele I shall non hele yhave:
In you lieth, whan you list that it so be,
The daie in whiche me clothin shall my grave,
And in you my life, in you might to save
Me fro disese of all my painis smerte:
And farith now wele, myne own dere swete herte!

Le vostre, T.

This lettir forthe was sent unto Creseide,
Of whiche her answere in effect was this;
Full pitously she wrote ayen, and seide,
That all so sonè as she might iwis
She would come, and amende that was amis;
And, finally, she wrote and sayid then
She would ycome, ye, but she n'ist not when.
But in her lettir madin she soche festes
That wondir was, and swore she loved him best,
Of whiche he found but botomles bihestes.
But, Troilus, thou maiest now east and west
Pipe in an ivie lefe if that the lest:
Thus goth the world; God shild us fro mischaunce,
And every wight that menith trouth avaunce!
Encresin gan the wo fro daie to night
Of Troilus for tarying of Creseide,

And leſſin gan his hope and ek his might,
For whiche al doun he in his bedde him leide;
He ne ete, dronke, ne ſlept, ne wordè ſeide,
Imagining aie that ſhe was unkinde,
For whiche well nigh he wext out of his mind.
This dreme of whiche I told have eke beforne
Maie nevir come out of his remembraunce;
He thought aie well he had his ladie lorn,
And that Jovis of his hie purveiaunce
Him ſhewed had in ſlepe the ſignifiaunce
Of her untrouth and his diſavinture,
And that the bore was ſhewed him in figure;
For whiche he for Sibylle his ſuſtir ſent,
That callid was Caſſandre' eke all about,
And all his dreme he told her er he ſtent,
And her beſought aſſoilin him the doubt
Of the ſtrong bore with all his tuſkis ſtout;
And, finally, within a litil ſtounde
Caſſandra him gan thus his dreme expound.
She gan firſt ſmile, and ſaid, O brothir dere!
If thou a ſothe of this deſireſt to knowe
Thou muſt a ſewe of oldè ſtories here,
To purpoſe how that Fortune ovirthrowe
Hath lordis old, through which within a throw
Thou ſhalt this bore well know, and of what kinde
He comin is, as men in bokis finde.
Diana, whiche that wrothe was and in ire,
For Grekis n'olde doin her ſacrifice,
Ne encens on her altar ſet on fire,
She for that Grekis gon her ſo diſpiſe
Ywrake her in a wondir cruill wiſe,
For with a bore as grete as oxe in ſtall
She made up frete ther corne and vinis all.
To ſlea the bore was all the countrie reiſed,
Emongis whiche there came this borè to ſe
A maid, one of this worlde the beſt ipraiſed;
And Meleager, lorde of that countre,
He lovid ſo this freſhè maidin fre,
That with his manhode er he wouldè ſtent
This bore he ſlough, and her the hed he ſent.
Of whiche, as oldè bokis tellin us,
There roſe a conteke and a grete envie;
And of this lorde diſendid Tydeus
By ligne, or ellis oldè bokis lie;
But how this Meleager gan to die,
Thorough his mothir, woll I you not tell,
For all to long it werin for to dwell.
She tolde eke how Tydeus, er ſhe ſtent,
Unto the ſtrongè cite of Thebes
(To claimin kingdome of the cite) went
For his felawè Dan Polynices,
Of whiche the brothir Dan Eteocles
Full wrongfully of Thebis held the ſtrength;
This toldè ſhe by prôceſſe all by length.
She tolde eke how Hemonides aſterte
Whan Tydeus ſlough fiftie knightis ſtoute;
She tolde eke all the propheſies by herte,
And how that ſevin kingis with ther rout
Beſiegedin the cite all aboute,
And of the holie ſerpent, and the well,
And of the Furies all, ſhe gan him tell.

Aſſociat profugus Tydeus primo Polynicem,
Tydea legatum docet, inſidiaſque ſecundus,
Teſtius Hæmathia cæſi, & vatem latitantem,
Quartus habet Reges incuntes prælia ſeptem,
Lemniadum Furiæ quinto narrantur, & angues,
Archemori buſtum ſexto, ludique leguntur,
Dat Thebis vatem Græiorum ſeptimus umbris,
Octavo cecidit Tydeus, ſpes, vita Pelaſgum,
Hippomedon nono moritur cum Parthenopæo,
Fulmine percuſſus decimo Capaneus ſuperatur,
Undecimo ſeſe perimunt per vulnera fratres,
Argivum flentem narrat duodenus, & ignem.

Of Archinorie's burying and the plaies,
And how Amphiaraus fill through the grounde,
How Tydeus was ſlain, Lord of Argeies,
And how Hipome'don in a litil ſtounde
Was dreint, and dedde Parthenope of wound,
And alſo how Capanëus the proude
With thonder dint was ſlain, that cryd loude.
She gan eke tell him how that eithir brother,
Eteocles and Polynice alſo,
At a ſcarmiſhe eche of 'hem ſlough the other,
And of Argivis weping and ther mo,
And how the toun was brent ſhe told eke tho;
And tho diſcendid doune from jeſtis old
To Diomede, and thus ſhe ſpake and told:
This ilkè bore betokenith Diomede,
Tydeus ſonne, that doune diſcendid is
Fro Mele'ager, that made the bore to blede,
And thy ladie, where ſo ſhe be iwis,
This Diomede her herte hath and ſhe his:
Wepe if thou wolt or leve, for out of dout
This Diomede is in and thou art out.
Thou ſaieſt nat ſothe, (quod he) thou ſorcereſſe,
With all thy falſè ghoſt of prophecie;
Thou weniſt ben a grete devinereſſe,
Now ſeeſt thou nat this ſole of fantaſie
Pinin her upon ladies for to lie:
Awaie, (quod he) there Jovis yeve the ſorowe!
Thou ſhalt be fals para'venture er to morow.
As well thou mightiſt lien on gode Alceſte,
That was of all creturis (but men lie)
That evir werin kindiſt and the beſte,
For whan her huſbonde was in jeopardie
To die himſelf, but if ſhe wouldè die,
She cheſe for him to die and gon to hell,
And ſtarſe anon, as us the bokis tell.
Caſſandre goeth; and he with cruill herte
Foryate his wo for angre of her ſpeche,
And fro his bedde all ſodainly he ſterte,
As though all whole him had imade a leche,
And daie by daie he gan enquire and ſeche
A ſothe of this with all his beſy cure;
And thus he drivith forthe his avinture.
Fortune, whiche that the permutacion
Of all thinges hath, as it is her committed
Through purveiaunce and diſpoſicion
Of high Jove, as reignis ſhall ben yflitted
Fro folk to folk, or whan thei ſhal ben ſmitted,
Gan pull awaie the fethirs bright of Troie
Fro daie to daie, till thei ben bare of joie.
Emong all this the fine of the' jeopardie
Of Hector gan approchin wondir blive,
The Fatis would his foule ſhould unbodie,
And ſhapin had a mene it out to drive,
Ayenſt whiche fate him helpith not to ſtrive,

But on a daie to fightin gan he wende,
At whiche, alas! he caught his liv'is ende:
For whiche me thinkith every manir wight
That hauntith armis oughtin to bewaile
The deth of him that was so noble' a knight,
For as he drough a king by th' aventaile,
Unware of this Achilles through the maile
And through the bodie gan him for to rive,
And thus the worthy knight was reft of live;
For whom, as old' bokis tellin us,
Was made soch wo that tong it maie nat tel,
And namily the sorowe' of Troilus,
That next him was of worthinesse the well,
And in this wo gan Troilus to dwell,
That what for sorowe, love, and for unrest,
Full oft a daie he had his hertè brest.
But nathèlesse though he gon him dispaire,
And drede aie that his ladie was untrue,
Yet aie on her his hertè gan repaire,
And, as these lovirs doen, he sought aie newe
To get ayen Creseidè bright of hewe,
And in his herte he went her excusing,
That Calchas causid all her tarying.
And oftin time he was in purpose grete
Him selvin like a pilgrim to disgise
To sene her; but he maie not counterfete
To ben unknowen of folke that werin wise,
Ne finde excuse aright that maie suffice,
If he among the Grekis knowin were,
For whiche he wept full oft many a tere.
To her he wrote yet oftin time all newe
Full pitously, he left it nat for slouthe,
Beseching her, sithins that he was true,
That she would come ayen and hold her trouth;
For whiche Creseide upon a daie for routh,
I take it so, touching all this mattere
Wrote him ayen, and saied as ye maie here;
Cupid'is sonne, ensample' of godelihede,
O swerde of knighthode, sours of gentilnesse!
How might a wight in turment and in drede,
And helelesse, you sendin as yet gladnesse?
I hertilesse, I sicke, I in distresse,
Sens ye with me nor I with you maie dele,
You neithir sende I maie ne herte ne hele.
Your lettirs full the papir all iplainted
Commevid havin myne hert'is pite;
I have eke sene with teris all depainted
Your lettir, and how ye requirin me
To come ayen, whiche yet ne maie not be,
But why, left that this lettir foundin were,
No mencioun ne make I now for fere.
Grevous to me (God wote) is your unrest,
Your hast, and that the goddis ordinaunce
It semith nat ye take it for the best,
Nor othir thing n'is in your remembraunce
As thinkith me, but onely your plesaunce;
But beth nat wroth, and that I you beseche,
For that I tarie' is all for wickid speche:
For I have herd well more than I wend
Touching us two how thingis have istond,
Whiche I shall with dissimuling amende;
And beth not wroth, I have eke undirstond
How ye ne doe but holdin me in honde;
But now no force; I can nat in you gesse
But allè trouthe and allè gentilnesse.
Comin I woll, but yet in soche disjointe
I stond as now, that what yere or what daie
That this shall be that can I nat apointe;
But in effect I praie you as I maie
Of your gode worde and of your frendship aie,
For truily while that my life maie dure
As for a frende ye maie in me assure.
Yet praie I you on evill ye na take
That it is short whiche that I to you write;
I dare nat there I am well lettirs make,
Ne nevir yet ne could I well endite;
Eke grete effect men writin in place lite;
Th' entent is all, and nat the lettirs space:
And farith well; God have you in his grace!

Le vostre, C.

This Troilus thought this lettir al straunge
Whan he it sawe, and sorowfully he sight;
Him thought it like a kalendes of eschaunge;
But, finally, he ful ne trowin might
That she ne would him holdin that she hight,
For with ful evill wil liste him to leve
That lovith wel, in such case, though him greve.
But nathèlesse men sain that at the last
For any thing men shal the sothè se,
And suche a case betide, and that as fast,
That Troilus wel understonde that she
N'as nat so kinde as that her ought to be;
And, finally, he wote now out of dout
That al is lost that he hath ben about.
Stode on a daie in his melancolie
This Troilus, and in suspectioun
Of her for whom he wenid for to die,
And so befil that throughout Troiè toun,
As was the gise, iborne was up and doun
A manir cote armoure, as saithe the storie,
Beforn Deiphobe, in signe of his victorie;
The whichè cote, as tellith Lollius,
Deiphobe it had yrente fro Diomede
The samè daie; and when this Troilus
It sawe he gan to takin of it hede,
Avising of the length and of the brede,
And al the werke, but as he gan beholde
Ful sodainly his herte began to colde,
As he that on the coler sonde within
A broche that he Creseidè yave at morow
That she from Troiè tonne must nedis twin,
In remembraunce of him and of his sorow,
And she him laide ayen her saith to borow
To kepe it aie; but now ful wel he wist
His lady n'as no longir on to trist.
He goeth him home, and gan ful sone sende
For Pandarus, and al this newè chaunce,
And of this broch he tolde him orde and ende,
Complaining of her hert'is variaunce,
His longè love, his trouth, and his penaunce;
And aftir Deth, withoutin wordis more,
Ful fast he cried, his rest him to restore.
Than spake he thus; O lady mine, Creseide!
Where is your faith, and where is your behest?
Where is your love? where is your trouth? he seide;

Of Diomede have ye now al his feſt?
Alas! I would have trowid at the leſt
That ſens ye n'olde in trouthè to me ſtonde
That ye thus n'olde have holdin me in honde.
Who ſhal now trowen on any othis mo?
Alas! I nevir would have wende er this
That ye, Creſeide, coulde have chaungid ſo,
Ne but I had agilte and don amis;
So cruel wende I nat your herte iwis
To ſle me thus; alas! your name of trouthe.
Is now fordone, and that is al my routhe.
Was there none othir broche you liſt to lete
To feſſe with your newè love, (quod he)
But thilkè broche that I with teris wete
You yave as for a remembraunce of me?
None other cauſe, alas! ne haddin ye
But for diſpite, and eke for that ye mente
All uttirly to ſhewin your entente:
Through which I ſe that clene out of your [minde
Ye have me caſt, and I ne can nor maie
For all this world within mine herte finde
To' unlovin you a quartir of a daie;
In curſid time I borne was, welawaie!
That you that done me all this wo endure
Yet love I the beſt of any creture.
Now God (quod he) me ſendin yet the grace
That I maie metin with this Diomede,
And truily if I have might and ſpace
Yet ſhall I make I hope his ſidis blede:
Now God (quod he) that aughtiſt takin hede
To forthrin trouthe, and wrongis to punice,
Why n'ilt thou don a vengeaunce of this vice?
O Pandarus! that in dremes for to triſte,
Me blamid haſt, and wonte art oft upbreide,
Now maiſt thou ſene thy ſelfe, if that the liſt,
How trewe is now thy necè bright Creſeide;
In ſondry formis, (God it wote) he ſeide,
The goddis ſhewin bothè joie and tene
In ſlepe, and by my dreme it is now ſene.
And certainly, withoutin morè ſpeche,
From hennis forthe, as ferforthe as I maie,
Mine owne deth in armis wol I ſeche,
I ne retche nat how ſonè be the daie;
But trewily, Creſeidè, ſwetè Maie!
Whom I have ay with al my might iſerved,
That ye thus done I have it nat deſerved.
This Pandarus, that al theſe thingis herde,
And wiſte wel that he ſaid a ſothe of this,
He nat a worde ayen to him anſwerde,
For ſory of his frend'is ſorow' he is,
And ſhamid for his nece hath done amis,
And ſtante aſtonied of theſe cauſis twaie
As ſtil as ſtone; o worde ne coulde he ſaie.
But at the laſt thus he yſpake and ſeide:
My brothir dere! I may do the no more;
What ſhould I ſaine? I hate iwis Creſeide,
And God it wote I wol hate her er-more;
And that thou me beſoughtiſt don of yore,
Having unto mine honour ne my reſte
Right no regarde, I did al that the leſte.
Yf I did aught which that might likin the
It is me leſe, and of this treſon now
God wote that it a ſorew is to me,
And dredeleſſe, for hert'is eſe of you,
Right faine I would amende it wiſt I how,
And fro this world Almighty God I praie,
Delivir her ſone! I can no more ſaie.
Great was the woe and plaint of Troilus,
But forthe her courſe Fortune aie gan to holde,
Creſeide lovith the ſonne of Tydeus,
And Troilus mote wepe in caris colde:
Such is this worlde, who ſo it can beholde;
In eche eſtate is litill hert'is reſte;
God leve us to takin it for the beſte!
In many cruil bataile, out of drede,
Of Troilus this ilkè noble knight
(As men maie in theſe oldè bokis rede)
Was ſene his knighthod and his gretè might,
And dredèleſſe his irè daie and night
Ful cruilly the Grekis aie abought,
And alwaie moſt this Diomede he ſought.
And oftin timis I finde that thei mette
With blody ſtrokis and with wordis grete,
Aſſaying how ther ſperis werin whette;
And God it wote with many' a cruil hete
Gan Troilus upon his helme to bete:
But nathèleſſe Fortune it naught ne would
Of eithir's honde that eithir dyin ſhould.
And if I had itakin for to write
The armis of this ilkè worthy man,
Than would I of his battailis endite;
But for that I to writin firſt began
Of his love, I have ſaidin as I can
His worthy dedis, who ſo liſte 'hem here,
Rede Dares, he can tel 'hem al iſere.
Beſeching every lady bright of hewe,
And every gentil woman, what ſhe be,
Al be it that Creſeidè was untrewe,
That for that gilt ye be nat wroth with me,
Ye maie her gilte in othir bokis ſe;
And gladdir I would writin if you leſte
Of Penelope's trouth and gode Alceſte.
Ne ſaie I nat this all only for men,
But moſt for women that betrayid be
Through ſals folke, God yeve 'hem ſorrow, *Amen!*
That with ther gretè witte and ſubtilte
Betrayin you, and this commevith me
To ſpeke; and in effecte you al I praie
Beth ware of men, and herkenith what I ſaie:
Go, litil boke, go litill tragedie,
There God my makir yet er that I die
So ſende me might to make ſome comedie;
But, litill boke, make thou the none envie,
But ſubject ben unto al poeſie,
And kiſſe the ſteppes wher as thou ſeiſt pace
Of Virgil, Ovide, Homer, Lucan, Stace.
And for there is ſo grete diverſite
In Engliſh, and in writing of our tonge,
So praie I to God that none miſwrite the,
Ne the miſſe-metre for defaute of tonge;
And redde where ſo thou be or ellis ſonge
That thou be undirſtonde God I beſeche;
But yet to purpoſe of my rathir ſpeche.
The wrathe, as I began you for to ſeie,
Of Troilus the Grekis boughtin dere,
For thouſandis his hondis madin deye,

As he that was withoutin any pere,
Save in his time Hector, as I can here;
But welawaie! (save onely Godd'is wil)
Dispitously him slough the fierse Achil.
And whan that he was slain in this manere,
His lighte goste ful blisfully is went
Up to the' holowneſſe of the ſeventh ſphere,
In his place leting everiche element,
And there he ſawe, with ful aviſement,
The erratike ſterres, herkening harmonie,
With ſownis full of hevins melodie.
And doun from thennis faſt he gan aviſe
This litil ſpotte of erth that with the ſe
Embracid is, and fully gan diſpiſe
This wretchid world, and helde al vanite
In reſpecte of the plaine felicite
That is in heven above, and at the laſt
There he was ſlaine his loking doun he caſt.
And in him ſelfe he lough right at the wo
Of them that weptin for his dethe ſo faſt,
And dampnid all our werkes, that foloweth ſo
The blinde luſt whiche that ne may nat laſt,
And ſhuldin al our herte on hevin caſt;
And forthe he went, ſhortily forto tell,
There as Mercury ſortid him to dwel.
Suche fine hath, lo! this Troilus for love,
Suche fine hath all his grete worthineſſe,
Suche fine hath his eſtate royal above,
Suche fine his luſt, ſuche fine hath his nobleſſe,
Suche fine hath this falſe world'is brotilneſſe!
And thus began his loving of Creſeide
As I have tolde, and in this wiſe he deide.
O yonge and freſhe folkis, he or ſhe!
In whiche that love up growith with your age,
Repairith home from worldely vanite,
And of your hertes up caſtith the viſage
To thilke God that aftir his image
You made, and thinkith al n'is but a faire,
This world that paſſith ſone, as flouris faire:
And lovith him the whiche that right for love
Upon a croſſe, our ſoulis for to bey,
Firſt ſtarfe and roſe, and ſit in heven above,
For he n'il falſin no wight, dare I ſey,
That wol his hert al wholly on him ley;
And ſens he beſt to love is and moſt meke
What nedith ſainid lovis for to ſeke?
Lo! here of Painims curſid oldè rites!
Lo! here what al ther goddis maie availe!
Lo! here this wretchid world'is appetites!
Lo! here the fine and guerdon for travaile
Of Jove, Apollo, Mars, and ſuch raſkaile!
Lo! here the forme of oldè clerkis ſpeche
In poetrie, if ye ther bokis ſeche!
O, moral Gower! this Boke I directe
To the and to the philoſophicall Strode,
To vouchſafe there nede is for to correcte
Of your benignities and zelis gode;
And to the ſothfaſt Chriſt, that ſtarfe on rode,
With al mine hert of mercy er I praie,
And to the Lorde right thus I ſpeke and ſaie:
Thou One, and Two, and Thre! eterne on live,
That raigniſt aie in Thre, and Two, and One!
Uncircumſcript, and all maiſt circumſcrive,
From viſible and inviſible ſone
Defende us in thy mercy everichone!
So make us, Jeſus, to thy mercy digne,
For love of maide and mothir thine benigne!

TESTAMENT OF FAIRE CRESEIDE*.

A DOLY ſeſon till a carefull dite
Should correſponde and be equivalent;
Right ſo it was whan I began to write
This tragedy, the weder right fervent,
Whan Aries in middis of the Lent
Showris of haile gan fro the north diſcende,
That ſcantly fro the cold I might me defende.

Yet nertheleſſe within mine orature
I ſtode, whan Titan had his bemis bright
Withdrawin doun, and ſcylid undir cure,
And faire Venus the beaute of the night,
Upraiſe, and ſette unto the weſte ful right
Her goldin face, in oppoſitioun
Of god Phœbus, direcle diſcending doun.

Throughout the glaſſe her bemis braſt ſo faire
That I might ſe on every ſide me by,
The northrin winde hath purified the aire,
And ſhedde his miſty cloudis fro the ſkie,
The froſte freſid, the blaſtis bittirly
Fro pole Artike came whiſking loud and ſhill,
And cauſid me remove ayenſt my will:

For I truſtid that Venus, Lov'is quene,
To whom ſomtime I hight obedience,
My fadid hert of love ſhe would make grene,
And thereupon with humble reverence
I thought to praie her hie magnificence,
But for grete colde as than I lettid was,
And in my chambre to the fire gan pas.

Though love be hote, yet in a man of age
It kindlith nat ſo ſone as in youthed,
Of whom the blode is flowing in a rage,
And in the olde the corage dul and ded,
Of whiche the fire outwarde is beſt remed:
To helpe by phiſike wher that nature failed:
I am experte, for bothe I have aſſailed.

I made the fire and bekid me aboute,
Than toke I drinke my ſpirites to comforte,
And armid me wel fro the colde theroute:
To cutte the wintir night and make it ſhorte
I toke a quere, and lefte al othir ſporte,
Writin by worthy Chaucer glorious
Of faire Creſeide and luſty Troilus:

And there I founde aftir that Diomede
Recevid had that lady bright of hewe
How Troilus nere out of his witte abrede,
And wept full ſore, with viſage pale of hewe
For which wanhope his teris gan renewe
While Eſperus rejoyſid him againe;
Thus while in joie he lived and while in paine.

Of her beheſt he had grete comforting,
Truſting to Troie that ſhe wold make retour,
Whiche he deſired moſt of al erthly thing,
For why? ſhe was his onely paramour;
But whan he ſawe paſſid both day and hour
Of her gaincome, in ſorowe gan oppreſſe
His woful herte in care and hevineſſe.

Of his diſtreſſe me nedith nat reherſe,
For worthy Chaucer in that ſame boke
In godely termis and in joly verſe
Compilid hath his caris, who will loke:
To break my ſlepe anothir quere I toke,
In which I founde the fatal deſtiny
Of faire Creſeide, which endid wretchidly.

Who wote if all that Chaucer wrate was trewe?
Nor I wote nat if this narracion
Be authoriſed, or forgid of the newe
Of ſome poete by his invencion,
Made to reporte the lamentacion
And wofull ende of this luſty Creſeide,
And what diſtreſſe ſhe was in or ſhe deide.

* The Author of The Teſtament of Creſeide, which might paſs for the ſixth book of this ſtory, I have been informed by Sir James Eriſkin late Earl of Kelly, and diverſe aged ſcholars of the Scottiſh nation, was one Mr. Robert Henderſon, chief ſchoolmaſter of Dumfermlin, a little time before Chaucer was firſt printed, and dedicated to King Henry VIII. by Mr. Thynne, which was near the end of his reign. Mr. Henderſon wittily obſerving that Chaucer in his fifth book had related the death of Troilus, but made no mention what became of Creſeide, he learnedly takes upon him, in a fine poetical way, to expreſs the puniſhment and end due to a falſe unconſtant whore, which commonly terminates in extreme miſery. *Urry.*

Whan Diomede had al his appetite
And more fulfilled of this faire lady
Upon anothir fette was his delite,
And fende to her a libel repudy,
And her excluded fro his company;
Than defolate fhe walkid up and doun,
As fome men faine in the courte as commune.

O faire Creſeide! the floure and a per fe
Of Troie and Grece, how were thou fortunate
To chaunge in filthe al thy feminite,
And be with fleſhly luſt fo maculate,
And go among the Grekes erly and late
So giglotlike, taking thy foule pleſaunce!
I have pite the fhould fall fuche miſchaunce.

Yet nerthèleſſe, what er men deme or fay
In ſcornful langage of thy brutilneſſe,
I fhall excufe as ferforth as I may
Thy womanhed, thy wifedome, and fairneſſe,
The which Fortune hath put to fuche diſtreſſe,
As her pleſid, and nothing throughe the gilte
Of the through wickid langage to be fpilte

This faire lady, on this wife deſtitute
Of al comforte and conſolatioun,
Right prively, without felo'wſhip or refute,
Diſhevelid, paſſid out of the toun
A mile or two unto a manſioun
Bildid ful-gaie, where her fathir Calchas
Which than among the Grekis dwelling was.

Whan her he ſaw the cauſe he gan enquire
Of her coming: fhe ſaid, ſighing ful ſore,
For Diomede had gottin his deſire
He woxe wery, and would of me no more.
Quod Calchas, Doughtir wepe thou nat therfore,
Paravinture al comith for the beſt:
Welcome; to me thou art ful dere a geſt.

This olde Calchas, aftir the lawe was thò,
Was kepir of the temple as a preſte
In whiche Venus and her ſonne Cupido
Were honourid, and his chambre was neſt,
To which Creſeide with bale enewed in breſt
Uſid to paſſe, her prayirs for to ſaie,
While at the laſt upon a ſolempne daie,

As euſtome was, the peple ferre and nere
Before the none unto the temple went
With ſacrifice devout in ther manere;
But ſtil Creſeide, hevy in her intent,
Into the church would nat herſelf preſent,
For giving of the peple' any deming
Of her expulſe fro Diomede the King,

But paſſid into a ſecrete oratore,
Where fhe might wepe her wofull deſtiny;
Behinde her backe fhe cloſid faſt the dore,
And on her kneis bare fel doun in hie;
Upon Venus and Cupide angirly
She cryid out, and ſayid in this wiſe,
Alas that er I made you ſacrifiſe!

Ye gave me ones a divine reſponſaile
That I ſhould be the floure of love in Troie;
Now am I made an unworthy outwaile,
And al in care tranſlatid is my joie:
Who ſhal me gide? who ſhal me now convoie,
Sithe I fro Diomede and noble Troilus
Am clene excluded, abject, odious?

O falſe Cupide! none is to wite but thou,
And the mothir of Love, that blinde goddace;
Ye cauſed me undirſtande alwaie and trow
The fede of love was fowin on my face,
And aie grewe grene thorough your fople grace;
But now, alas! that fede with froſt is ſlaine,
And I fro lovirs lefte and all forlaine.

Whan this was ſaid, doun in an extaſy,
Raviſhed in ſpirite, in a dreme fhe fel,
And by apparaunce herde where fhe did lie
Cupide the King tinging a ſilvir bel,
Which men might here fro hevin into hel,
At whoſe ſounde before Cupido aperes
The ſeven planets diſcending fro the ſpheres,

Whiche hath powir of al thing gene'rable,
To rule and ſtere by their gret influence
Wedir and winde, and courſe variable;
And firſt of al Saturne gave his ſentence,
Whiche gave to Cupide litil reverence,
But as a boiſtous chorle in his manere
Came crabb'dly with auſtrine loke and chere.

His face frounſid, his lere was like the lede,
His tethe chattrid, and ſhivered with the chin,
His eyin droupid, whole ſonkin in his hede,
Out at his noſe the mildrop faſt gan rin,
With lippis blew, and chekis lene and thin,
The iſeickils that fro his heer doune honge
Was wondir grete, and as a ſpere as longe;

Attour his belte his liart lockis laie
Feltrid unfaire, or fret with froſtis hore,
His garment and his gite ful gay of graie,
His widrid wede fro him the winde out wore;
A bouſtous bowe within his honde he bore,
Undir his girdle' a faſhe of felone flains
Fedrid with iſe and hedid with holſtains.

Than Jupiter right faire and amiable,
God of the ſterris in the firmament,
And norice to al thing generable,
Fro his fathir Saturne farre different,
With burly face, and browis bright and brent,
Upon his hed a garlonde wondris gaie
Of flouris faire, as it had ben in Maie;

His voice was clere, as criſtal was his eien,
As goldin wier ſo glittring was his here,
His garment and his gite ful gaie of grene,
With goldin liſtis gilte on every gere,
A burly brandy about his middle' he bere,
And in his right hand he had a groundin ſpere,
Of his fathir the wrothe fro us to bere.

Next aftir him came Mars, the god of ire,
Of ſtrife, debate, and all diſcencioun,
To chide and fight as fierſe as any fire,
In harde harneſſe hewmonde and habergioun,
And on his haunch a rouſty fel fauchoun,
And in his hande he had a rouſty ſworde,
Writhing his face, with many angry worde;

Shaking his brande before Cupide he come,
With red viſage and griſly glowing eien,
And at his mouth a blubbir ſtode of ſome,
Like to a bore whetting his tuſkis kene,
Right tulſurelike, but temperaunce in tene,
An horne he blewe with many bouſtous bragge,
Whiche al thisworldwithwarre hath made towagge.

Than faire Phœbus, lanterne and lampe of light,
Of man and beſt both frute and floriſhing,
Tendir norice, and baniſhir of night,
And of the worlde cauſing by his moving
And influence life in al erthly thing,
Without comforte of whom of force to nought
Muſt go dyin all that this world hath wrought.

As king royall he rode upon a chare,
The whiche Phaeton ſomtime gided unright.
The brightneſſe of his face whan it was bare
Non might beholde for perſing of his ſight,
This goldin carte with firy bemis bright
Foure yokid ſtedis ful different of hewe
But baite or tiring through the ſpheris drew.

The firſt was ſorde, with mane as red as roſe,
Callid Eoye in the orient;
The ſeconde ſtede to name hight Ethioſe,
Whitely and pale, and ſomdele aſcendent;
The third Pyrois, right hote and fervent;
The fourth was blak, and callid Phlegone;
Which rollith Phœbus doun into the ſe.

Venus was there preſent, that goddes gay,
Her ſonn'is quarrel to defende, and make
Her owne complaint, cladde in a nice aray,
The one halfe grene, th' othir halfe ſable blake,
White heer as gold, kembit and ſhede abake,
But in her face ſemid grete variaunce,
Whiles parfite truth and whilis inconſtaunce.

Undir ſmiling ſhe was diſſimulate,
Provocative with blinkis amorous,
And ſodainly chaungid and alterate,
Angry as any ſerpent venomous,
Right pungitive with wordis odious;
Thus variaunt ſhe was who liſt take kepe,
With one eye laugh and with the othir wepe,

In tokening that al fleſhely paramour,
Which Venus hath in rule and govirnaunce,
Is ſometime ſwete, ſometime bittir and ſour,
Right unſtable, and ful of variaunce,
Minglid with careful joye and falſe pleſaunce,
Now hotte, now colde, now blith, now ful of wo,
Now grene as leſe, now widrid and ago.

With boke in hand than come Mercurious,
Right eloquent and ful of rethorie,
With polite termis and delicious,
With penne and inke to reporte al redie,
Setting ſongis and ſinging merily,
His hode was red heclid attour his croun,
Like til a poete of the olde faſioun.

Boxis he bare with fine electuares
And ſugrid ſiropes for digeſtion,
Spicis belonging to the potiquares,
With many wholſome ſwete confection,
Doctor in phiſike cledde in ſcarlet goun,
And furrid wel, as ſuche one ought to be,
Honeſt and gode, and nat a worde couth lie.

Next after him come Lady Cynthia
The laſte of al, and ſwiftiſt in her ſphere,
Of colour blake, buſkid with hornis twa,
And in the night ſhe liſtith beſt t' apere,
Hawe as the leed, of colour nothing clere,
For al the light ſhe borroweth at her brother
Titan, for of her ſelfe ſhe hath non other.

Her gite was gray and ful of ſpottis blake,
And on her breſt a chorle paintid ful even,
Bering a buſhe of thornis on his bake,
Whiche for his theft might clime no ner the heven.
Thus when thei gadrid were the goddis ſeven
Mercurius thei choſed with one aſſent
To be fore-ſpekir in the parliment.

Who had ben there and liking for to here
His faconde tonge and termis exquiſite,
Of rethorike the practike he might lere,
In breſe ſermon a preignant ſentence write,
Before Cupide, valing his cappe a lite,
Speris the cauſe of that vocacioun,
And he anon ſhewde his entencioun.

Lo, quod Cupide, who wol blaſpheme the name
Of his owne god either in worde or dede
To al goddis he doeth bothe loſſe and ſhame,
And ſhould have bittir painis to his mede;
I ſaie this by yondir wretche Creſeide,
The whiche through me was ſomtime flour of love;
Me' and my mothir ſhe ſtately can reprove,

Saying of her gret infelicite
I was the cauſe, and my mothir Venus
She called a blinde goddes and might nat ſe,
With ſclaundir and defame injurious;
Thus her living unclene and lechirous
She would retorte on me and my mother,
To whom I ſhewde my grace above al other.

And ſithe ye are al ſevin deficate
Participant of divine ſapience,
This gret injury done to' our high eſtate
Me thinke with paine we ſhuld make recompence;
Was ner to goddis done ſuche violence;
As wel for you as for my ſelfe I ſaie,
Therfore go help to revenge I you praie.

Mercurius to Cupide gave anſwere,
And ſaid, Sir King, my counſaile is that ye
Referre you to the hyiſt planet here,
And take to him the lowiſt of degre,
The paine of Creſeide for to modifie,
As God Saturne with him take Cynthia.
I am content (quod he) to take thei twa.

Than thus procedid Saturne and the Mone,
Whan thei the matir ripely had digeſt,
For the diſpite to Cupide that ſhe' had done,
And to Venus opin and manifeſt,
In al her life with pain to be opreſt,
And turment ſore, with ſikeneſſe incurable,
And to al lovirs be abhominable.

This doleful ſentence Saturne toke in hande,
And paſſid doun where careful Creſeide laie,
And on her hed he laide a froſty wande,
Than laufully on this wiſe gan he ſaie;
Thy grete fairneſſe and al thy beauty gaie,
Thy wanton blode, and eke thy goldin here,
Here I exclude fro the for evirmere:

I chaunge thy mirthe into melancoly,
Whiche is the mothir of al penſiveneſſe,
Thy moiſtir and thy hete to colde and dry,
Thine inſolence, thy plaie and wantonneſſe,
To grete diſeſe, thy pompe and thy richeſſe
Into mortal nede and grete penurie;
Thou ſuffre ſhalt, and as a beggir die.

O cruil Saturne! froward and angrie,
Harde is thy dome and to malicious,
Of faire Creſeide why haſt thou no mercie,
Whiche was ſo ſwete, gentill, and amorous?
Withdrawe thy ſentence and be gracious,
As you were ner, ſo ſhewith through thy dede
A wrekeful ſontence givin on Creſeide.

Than Cynthia, whan Saturne paſt awaie,
Out of her ſete diſcendid downe blive,
And red a bill on Creſeidè where ſhe laie,
Containing this ſentence diffinitive,
Fro hele of body here I the deprive,
And to thy ſikeneſſe ſhal be no recure,
But in dolour thy dayis to endure;

Thy criſtal eyen mengid with blode I make,
Thy voice ſo clere unpleſaunt here and hace,
Thy luſtie lere orſpred with ſpottis blake,
And lumpis hawe appering in thy face,
Where thou comiſt eche man ſhall flie the place;
Thus ſhalt thou go begging fro hous to hous
With cuppe and clappir, like a Lazarous.

This dolie dreme, this ugly viſioun,
Brought till an ende, Creſeide fro it awoke,
And all that courte and convocacioun
Vaniſhed awaie; than roſe ſhe up and toke
A poliſhed glaſſe, and her ſhadowe couth loke,
And whan ſhe ſawe' her viſage ſo deformate
If ſhe in herte were wo I n'ote, God wate.

Weping ful ſore, Lo! what it is (quod ſhe)
With froward langage for to move and ſtere
Our crabbid goddes! and ſo' is ſene on me;
My blaſpheming now have I bought ful dere,
All yerthly joie and mirthe I ſet arere;
Alas this daie, alas this woful tide,
Whan I began with my goddis to chide!

By this was ſaied a childe came fro the hal
To warne Creſeide the ſuppir was redie,
Firſt knockid at the dore, and eft couth call,
Madame, your fathir biddith you cum in hie,
He hath marveile ſo long on groſe ye lie,
And faith your bedis beth to long ſomdele,
The goddis wote all your entent full wele.

Quod ſhe, Faire child, go to my fathir dere,
And praie him come to ſpeke with me anon;
And ſo he did, and ſaied, Doughtir, what chere?
Alas! (quod ſhe) fathir, my mirthe is gone;
How ſo? (quod he) and ſhe gan all expone
As I have told, the vengeaunce and the wrake
For her treſpas Cupide on her couth take.

He lokid on her ugly lepir's face,
The whiche before was white as lily flour,
Wringing his handes oftimis ſaied Alace
That he had lived to ſe that woſull hour!
For he knewe well that there was no ſocour
To her ſikneſſe, and that doublid his pain:
Thus was there care inow betwixt 'hem twain.

Whan thei togidir mournid had full lang,
Quod Creſeide, Fathir, I would nat be kende,
Therfore in ſecrete wiſe ye let me gange
To yon hoſpitall at the toun's ende,
And thidir ſome mete for charite me ſende
To live upon, for all mirth in this yerth
Is fro me gone, ſoche is my wickid werth.

Whan in a mantill and a bevir hat,
With cuppe and clappir, wondir privily
He' opened a ſecrete gate, and out therat
Conveyid her that no man ſhould eſpie,
There to a village halfe a mile therebie
Delivered her in at the ſpittill hous,
And daily ſente her part of his almous.

Sum knew her well, and ſum had no knowlege
Of her, bicauſe ſhe was ſo deformate,
With bilis blake orſpred in her viſage,
And her faire colour fadid and alt'erate;
Yet thei preſumid for her hie regrate
And ſtill mourning ſhe was of noble kin,
With bittir will there thei tokin her in.

The daie paſſid, and Phœbus went to reſt,
The cloudis blake orwhelid all the ſkie,
God wote if Creſeide were a ſorowfull geſt,
Seing that uncouth fare and herborie;
But mete or drinke ſhe dreſſid her to lie
In a darke cornir of the hous alone,
And on this wiſe weping ſhe made her mone.

Here foloweth the complaint of Creſeide.

O ſoppe of ſorowe ſonkin into care!
O caitiſe Creſeide now and evirmare!
Gon is thy joie and al thy mirthe in yerth;
Of all blitheneſſe now art thou blake and bare;
There is no ſalve that helpin maie thy fare;
Fell is thy fortune, wickid is thy werthe,
Thy bliſſe is baniſhed, and thy bale unberde;
Undir the grete God if I gravin ware
Wher men of Grece ne yet of Troie might here!

Where is thy chambir wantonly beſene,
With burly bed and blankits broudid bene,
Spicis and wine to thy colatioun,
The cuppis all of gold and ſilver ſhene,
Thy ſwete metis ſervid in platis clene,
With ſavere ſauce of a gode faſhioun,
Thy gaie garmentes with many godely goun,
Thy pleſaunt laune pinnid with goldin pene?
All is arere thy grete roiall renoun.

Where is thy gardein with thy Grecis gaie,
And freſhè flouris, which the quene Floraie
Had paintid pleſauntly in every paine,
Where thou were wont full merily in Maie
To walke, and take the dewe by it was daie,
And here the merle and mavise many one,
With ladies faire in carolling to gone,
And ſe ther roiall renkis in ther raie?

This lepir loge take for thy godely boure,
And for thy bed take now a bounche of ſtre,
For wailid wine and metis thou had tho
Take moulid bred, pirate and ſidir ſoure,
But cuppe and clappir is all now ago.

My clere voice and my courtly carolling
Is ranke as roke, full hidous here and bace,
Deformid is the figure of my face,
To loke on it no peplè hath liking,
So ſped in ſight, I ſaie with ſore ſighing
Lying emong the lepir folke, Alas!

O ladies faire of Troie and Grece! attende
My freile fortune, mine infelicite,
My grete miſchefe which no man can amend,
And in your minde a mirrour make of me,

As I am new paravinture that ye,
For al your might, may come to the ſame ende
Or ellis worſe, if any worſe maie be;
Beware therefore, approchith nere your ende.
Nought is your fairneſſe but a fading floure,
Nought is your famous laude and hie honour
But winde inflate in othir mennis eres,
Your roſing redds to roting ſhall retoure,
Exemple make of me in your memoure,
Which of ſoche thingis wofull witnes beres,
Al welth in yerth as wind awaie it weres;
Beware therfore, approchith nere your hour.
Thus chiding with her drerie deſtine
Weping ſhe woke the night fro ende to ende:
But all in vain; her dole, her carefull crie,
Might not remede, ne yet her mourning mend;
A lepir ladie roſe and to her wende,
And ſaied, Why ſpurniſt thou again the wall
To ſle thy ſelf, and mende nothing at all?
Sith that thy weping but doublith thy wo,
I counſaile the make vertue of a nede,
Go lerne to clappe thy clappir to and fro,
And lerne aftir the lawe of lepers lede.
There was no bote, but forthwith than ſhe yede
Fro place to place, while cold and hungir ſore
Compellid her to be a ranke beggore.
That ſamè time of Troie the garniſoun,
Whiche had the cheftain worthy Troilus
Through jeoperdy of warre had ſtrikin doun
Knightis of Grece in nombir marveilous,
With grette triumphe and laude victorious
Again to Troie right roially thei rode
The waie wher Creſeide with the lepir ſtode.
Seing that companie come with o ſteven
Thei gave a crie, and ſhoke cuppis, Gode ſpede,
Worthie lordis! for Godd'is love of heven
To us lepirs part of your almoſe dede!
Than to her crie noble Troilus toke hede,
Having pite, nere by the place gan pas
Where Creſeide ſat, nat weting what ſhe was.
Than upon him ſhe keſt up bothe her eyen,
And with a blinke it come intill his thought
That he ſomtime her face before had ſein,
Bot ſhe was in ſoche plight he knew her nought,
Yet than her loke into his minde he brought,
The ſwete viſage and amorous blenking
Of faire Creſeide, ſomtime his own derling.
No wondir was ſuppoſe in mind that he
Toke her figure ſo ſone; and lo! now why
The' idea of a thing in caſe maie be
So depe enprintid in the fantaſie
That it deludith the wittes outwardly,
And ſo appereth in forme and like eſtate
Within the minde as it was figurate.
A ſparke of love than til his hert couth ſpring,
And kindilid his body in a fire
With hote fevir, in ſwette, and trembiling
Him toke, while he was redie to exſpire;
To bere his ſhilde his breſt begon to tire,
Within a while he chaungid many' a hewe,
And nerthèles nat one anothir knewe.
For knightly pite and memoriell
Of faire Creſeide a girdill gan he take,
A purſe of golde, and many' a gaie jewell,
And in the ſkirte of Creſeide doun gan ſhake,
Than rode awaie, and nat a worde he ſpake,
Penſife in herte, while he came to the toune,
And ſor grete care oft ſith almoſte ſell doune.
The lepre folke to Creſeide then couth draw,
To ſe the equall diſtribucioun
Of the almoſe; but whan the golde they ſawe
Eche one to othir privily gan roun,
And ſaied, Yon lorde hath more affectioun,
Hower it be, unto yon Lazarous
Than to us all, we knewe by his almous.
What lorde is yon, (quod ſhe) have ye no fele,
That doeth to us ſo grete humanite?
Yes, quod a lepre man, I knowe him wele,
Troilus it is, a knight gentle and fre.
Whan Creſeide undirſtode that it was he
Stiffir than ſtele there ſterte a bittir ſtound
Throughout her hert, and fill doune to the ground.
Whan ſhe, orcome with ſighing ſore and ſad,
With many' a carefull crie and cold atone,
Now is my breſt with ſtormie ſtoundis ſtad,
Wrappid in wo, oh wretchfull will of one!
Than fell in ſwoun ful oft or ſhe would fone,
And evir in her ſwouning cried ſhe thus,
O falſe Creſeide, and true knight Troilus!
Thy love, thy laude, and all thy gentilneſſe,
I comptid ſmall in my proſperite,
So efflatid I was in wantonneſſe,
And clambe upon the fickle whele ſo hie,
All faithe and love I promittid to the
Was in thy ſelf fikill and furious;
O falſe Creſeide, and true knight Troilus!
For love of me thou kept thy countinaunce
Honeſt and chaſt in converſacion;
Of all women protectour and defence
Thou were, and helpid ther opinion:
My minde on fleſhly foule affection
Was enclinid to luſtis lecherous;
Fie, falſe Creſeide! o true knight Troilus!
Lovirs, beware, and take gode hede about
Whom that ye love, for whan ye ſuffre pain
I let you wit there is right fewe throughout
Whom ye maie truſt to have true love again;
Prove whan you woll, your labour is in vain;
Therfore I rede ye take them as ye finde,
For thei are ſad as wedircocke in winde
Bicauſe I knowe the grete unſtableneſſe,
Brittle as glaſſe, unto my ſelfe I ſaie,
Truſting in othir as grete brutilneſſe,
As inconſtaunt, and as untrue of ſaie;
Though ſome be true I wot right few ar thei:
Who findith truthe let him his lady ruſe;
None but my ſelf as now I woll accuſe.
Whan this was ſaid, with papir ſhe ſat doun,
And in this manir made her Teſtament;
Here I bequeth my corſe and carioun
With wormis and with todis to be rent,
My cuppe, my clappir, and mine ornament,
And all my gold, theſe lepre folke ſhall have,
Whan I am dedde to burie me in grave.
This roiall ring, ſet with this rubie redde,
Whiche Troilus in dowrie to me ſende,
To him again I leve it whan I am dedde,

To make my careful deth unto him kende.
Thus I conclude ſhortly and make an ende;
My ſp'rit I leve to Diane, where ſhe dwelles,
To walke with her in waſt wodis and welles.
O Diomede! thou haſt bothe broche and belte
Whiche Troilus gave me in tokining
Of his true love; and with that worde ſhe ſwelt.
And ſone a lepirman toke off the ring,
Than buried her withoutin tarying;
To Troilus forthwith the ring he bare,
And of Creſeide the deth he gan declare.
Whan he had herd her grete infirmite,
Her legacie, and lamentacioun,
And how ſhe endid in ſuch poverte,
He ſwelte for wo, and fell doune in a ſwoun,
For ſorowe his hertè to braſt was boun,
Sighing full ſadly ſaied I can no more,
She was untrue, and wo is me therfore.
Some ſaith he made a tombe of marble graie,
And wrote her name and ſuperſcripcioun,
And laid it on her grave whereas ſhe laie,
In golden lettirs, conteining this reſoun;
Lo! faire ladies, Creſeide of Troiè toun,
Sometime comptid the floure of womanhed,
Undir this ſtone, late lepir, lyith dedde!
Now worthy women, in this balade ſhort,
Made for your worſhip and inſtruction,
Of charite I moniſhe and exhorte,
Minge nat your love with falſe diſcepcion,
Bere in your minde this ſore concluſion
Of faire Creſeide as I have ſaied before;
Sith ſhe is dedde I ſpeke of her no more.

THE LEGENDE OF GOOD WOMEN*.

A THOUSAND timis I have herd men tell
That there is joie in heven and pain in hell,
And I acord it wele that it is ſo,
But nathèleſſe yet wot I wele alſo
That there n'is non dwelling in this countre
That eithir hath in heven or hell ibe,
Ne maie of it none othir waies wittin
But as he herd ſaied or found it writtin,
For by aſſaie there maie no man it preve.
But God forbede but that men ſhuldin leve
Well more thing than thei han ſeen with eye!
Men ſhall nat wenin every thing a lie
But if himſelf it ſeeth or els it doeth,
For God wote thing is nevir the leſſe ſoth
Though every wight ne maie it not iſe.
Bernarde the monke ne ſaugh not all parde,
Than motè we to bokis that we finde,
(Through which the oldè thingis ben in minde)
And to the doctrine of theſe oldè wiſe,
Yeve credence in evèry ſkilfull wiſe,
That tellin of theſe old apprevid ſtories
Of holines, of reignis, of victories,
Of love, of hate, and othir ſondrie thinges,
Of whiche I maie not makin reherſinges;
And if that oldè bokis were awaie
Ilorne were of all remembraunce the kaie.
Well ought us than honourin and beleve
Theſe bokis there we han none othir preve.
And as for me, though that I can but lite,
On bokis for to rede I me delite,
And to 'hem yeve I faithe and ful credence,
And in mine herte have 'hem in revèrence
So hertily, that there is gamè none
That fro my bokis makith me to gone,
But it be ſeldome, on the holie daie,
Save certainly whan that the month of Maie
Is comin, and I here the foulis ſing,
And that the flouris ginnin for to ſpring,
Farewell my boke and my devocion.
Now have I than eke this condicion,
That above all the flouris in the mede
Than love I moſte theſe flouris white and rede,
Soche that men callin Daiſies in our toun;
To them have I ſo grete affèctioun,
As I ſaied erſt, whan comin is the Maſe,
That in my bedde there dawith me no daie
That I n'am up and walking in the mede
To ſene this floure ayenſt the ſunnè ſprede
Whan it upriſith erly by the morowe;
That bliſfull ſight ſoftinith all my ſorowe;
So glad am I when that I have preſence
Of it to doin it all revèrence,
As ſhe that is of all flouris the floure,
Fulfillid of all vertue and honoure,
And evir ilike faire and freſhe of hewe
As wel in wintir as in ſummir newe;
This love I evre', and ſhall until I die,
All ſwore I not of this, I woll nat lie.
There lovid no wight hottir in his life;
And whan that it is eve I rennè blithe,
As ſone as evir the ſunne ginnith weſt,
To ſene this floure how it woll go to reſt;
For fere of night, ſo hatith ſhe derkneſſe,
Her chere is plainly ſpred in the brightneſſe
Of the ſunnè, for there it woll uncloſe:
Alas that I ne' had Engliſhe, rime, or proſe,
Suffiſiaunt this flourè to praiſe aright!
But helpith ye that han conning and might,
Ye lovirs, that can make of ſentiment;
In this caſe ought ye to be diligent
To forthrin me ſomwhat in my labour,
Whether ye ben with the Leſe or the Flour,
For well I wote that ye han here beforne
Of making ropen and lad awaie the corne,
And I come aftir glening here and there,
And am full glad if I maie finde an ere
Of any godely worde that ye han lefte;
And though it happe me to reherſin eft
That ye han in your freſhè ſongis ſaied
Forberith me, and beth not ill apaied,
Sith that ye ſe I doe it in the' honour
Of Love, and eke in ſervice of the flour,

* Some ladies in the court took offence at Chaucer's large ſpeeches againſt the untruth of women, therefore the Queen enjoined him to compile this book in the commendation of ſundry maidens and wives who ſhewed themſelves faithful to faithleſs men. This ſeems to have been written after The Flowre and the Leaf.

Whom that I ſerve as I have wit or might;
She is the clereneſſe and the very light
That in this derke world me windith and ledeth;
The hert within my wofull breſt you dredeth
And loveth ſo ſore, that ye ben verily
The maiſtris of my wit and nothing I;
My worde, my workes, is knit ſo in your bonde,
That as an harpe obeyith to the honde,
And makith ſoune aftir his fingiring,
Right ſo mowe ye out of mine hertè bring
Soch voice right as you liſt to laugh or pain;
Be ye my guide and ladie ſovèrain:
As to mine yerthly god to you I call
Bothe in this werke and my ſorowis all.
But wherfore that I ſpakè to yeve credence
To old ſtories, and doen 'hem revèrence,
And that men muſtin morè thing bileve
Than men may ſene at eye or ellis preve,
That ſhall I ſein whan that I ſe my time;
I maie not all at onis ſpeke in rime;
My buſie ghoſt, that thurſtith alwaie newe
To ſene this flour ſo yong, ſo freſhe of hewe,
Conſtrainid me with ſo gredie deſire
That in mine herte I ſelin yet the fire
That madè me to riſe er it were daie,
And this was now the firſt morowe of Maie,
With dredfull herte and glad devocion
For to ben at the reſurrection
Of this flourè, whan that it ſhould uncloſe
Again the ſunne, that roſe as redde as roſe,
That in the breſt was of the beſt that daie
That Agenor'is doughtir ladde awaie;
And doune on knees anon right I me ſette,
And as I could this freſhè flour I grette,
Kneling alwaie till it uncloſid was
Upon the ſmall, and ſoft, and ſwetè gras,
That was with flouris ſwete embroudid al,
Of ſoche ſwetneſſe and ſoche odour oer all
That for to ſpekin of gomme, herbe, or tre,
Compariſon maie none imakid be,
For it ſurmountith plainly all odoures,
And of riche beaute the moſt gaye of floures.
Forgottin had the yerth his pore eſtate
Of wintir, that him nakid made and mate,
And with his ſworde of colde ſo forè greved;
Now hath the' atempre ſonne al that releved
That nakid was, and clad it newe again;
The ſmallè foulis, of the ſeſon fain,
That of the panter and the net ben ſcaped,
Upon the foulir that 'hem made awhaped
In wintir, and deſtroyid had ther brode,
In his diſpite them thought it did 'hem gode
To ſing of him, and in ther ſong diſpiſe
The foulè chorle that for his covitiſe
Had 'hem betrayid with his ſophiſtrie:
This was ther ſong; The foulir we deſie,
And all his craſte: and ſome yſongin clere
Layis of love, that joie it was to here,
In worſhipping and praiſing of her make,
And for the newè bliſsful ſomir's ſake;
Upon the braunchis full of bloſmis ſoft
In ther delite thei tournid 'hem full oft,
And ſongin, Bliſſid be Sainct Valentine!
For on his daie I cheſe you to be mine,
Withoutin repenting, mine hertè ſwete!
And therwithall their beckis gonnin mete,
Yelding honour and humble obeiſaunce
To Love, and didden ther othir obſervaunce
That longith unto love and to nature;
Conſtrewe that as you liſt; I doe no cure:
And tho that had doin unkindèneſſe,
As doeth the tidiſe for newefangelneſſe,
Beſoughtin mercie of ther treſpaſing,
And humilly ſongin ther repenting,
And ſworin on the bloſmis to be true,
So that ther makis would upon 'hem rue:
And at the laſt thei madin ther acorde,
All ſound thei Daungir for the time a lorde,
Yet Pitè thorough his ſtrong gentill might
Foryave, and madè mercy paſſin right
Through Innocence and rulid Curteſie;
But I ne clepe nat innocence folie,
Ne falſe pite, for vertue is the mene,
As Ethicke ſaieth, in ſoche manir I mene:
And thus theſe foulis, voide of all malice,
Accordidin to love, and laſtin vice
Of hate, and ſongin all of one acorde,
Welcome Sommir, our governour and lorde!
And Zephyrus and Flora gentilly
Yave to the flouris ſoft and tendirly
Ther ſotè breth, and made 'hem for to ſprede,
As god and goddeſſe of the flourie mede,
In whiche me thought I might daie by daie
Dwellin alwaie the joly monthe of Maie
Withoutin ſlepe, withoutin mete or drinke:
Adoune full ſoftily I gan to ſinke,
And lening on my elbowe and my ſide
The longè daie I ſhope me for to' abide,
For nothing ellis, and I ſhall nat lie,
But for to lokin upon the Daiſie,
That well by reſon men it callè maie
The Daiſie, or els the eye of the daie,
The empriſe, and the floure of flouris all:
I praie to God that fairè mote ſhe fall,
And all that lovin flouris for her ſake!
But nathèleſſe ne wene nat that I make
In praiſin of the Floure again the Leſe
No more than of the corne again the ſheſe,
For as to me n'is levir none ne lother;
I n'am witholdin yet with neithir nother,
Ne' I n'ot who ſervith Leſe ne who the Floure,
Well broukin thei ther ſervice or laboure;
For this thing is all of anothir tonne,
Of old ſtorie, er ſoche thing was begonne.
Whan that the ſunne out of the ſouth gan weſt,
And that this floure gan cloſe and gon to reſt,
For derknes of the night the whiche ſhe drede,
Home to mine houſe full ſwiftly I me ſpede
To gone to reſt, and erly for to riſe
To ſene this floure to ſprede as I deviſe;
And in a little herbir that I have,
That benchid was of turvis freſh igrave,
I bad men ſhouldin me my couchè make;
For deinte of the newè ſommir's ſake
I bad 'hem ſtrawin flouris on my bedde:
Whan I was laied and had mine eyin hedde
I fell aſlepe, and ſlept an houre or two,
Me met how I laie in the midowe tho

To ſene this floure that I love ſo and drede,
And from aferre came walking in the mede
The god of Love, and in his hande a quene,
And ſhe was clad in roiall habite grene,
A fret of goldè ſhe had next her here,
And upon that a white corounne ſhe bere
With flourounis ſmall, and, I ſhall nat lie,
For all the worldè right as a Daiſie
Icrounid is, with whitè levis lite,
So were the florouns of her crounè white,
For of o perlè fine orientall
Her whitè coroune was imakid all,
For which the white coroune above the grene
Ymade her like a Daiſie for to ſene,
Conſidrid eke her fret of gold above;
Iclothid was this mightie god of Love
In ſilke embroidid, full of grenè greves,
In whiche there was a fret of red roſe leves,
The freſhiſt ſens the worlde was firſt bigon;
His gilt here was ycrounid with a ſon
In ſtede of gold, for hevineſſe and weight,
Therwith me thought his face ſhone ſo bright
That well unnethis might I him behold,
And in his hand methought I ſawe him hold
Two firie dartis as the gledis rede,
And angelike his wingis ſawe I ſprede;
And all be that men ſain that blinde is he
Algatis me thought that he might wele ſe,
For ſternily on me he gan behold,
So that his loking doeth min hertè cold;
And by the hande he helde this noble quene,
Crounid with white, and clothid al in grene,
So womanly, ſo benigne, and ſo meke,
That in this worlde though that men woldin ſeke
Halfe her beaute ne ſhouldin thei nat finde
In creture that yformid is by Kinde,
And therfore maie I ſain, as thinkith me,
This ſong in praiſing of this ladie frè:
Hide, Abſolon, thy giltè treſſis clere,
Heſter, laie thou thy mekeneſſe all adoun,
Hide, Jonathas, all thy frendly manere,
Penelope, and Marcia Catoun,
Make of your wifehode no compariſoun,
Hide ye your beauties Iſoude and Helein,
My ladie cometh, that all this maie diſtain.
Thy faire bodie ne let it not appere
Lavine, and thou Lucrece of Romè toun,
And Polyxene, that boughtin love ſo dere,
And Cleopatra, with all thy paſſioun,
Hide ye your trouthe of love and your renoun,
And thou Thiſbe, that haſt of love ſoche pain,
My ladie cometh, that all this maie diſtain.
Hero, Dido, Laodomia', iſere,
And Phyllis, hanging for Demophoon,
And Canace, eſpyid by thy chere,
Hypſipyle, betrayid by Jaſon,
Makith of your trouth neithir boſte ne ſoun,
Nor Hypermneſtra' or Ariadne, ye twaine,
My ladie cometh, that all this maie diſtain.
This balade maie full well iſongin be,
As I have ſaid erſt, by my ladie frè,
For certainly all theſe mowe not ſuffice
To' apperin with my ladie in no wiſe,

For as the ſunnè woll the fire diſtain,
So paſſith all my ladie ſovèrain,
That is ſo gode, ſo faire, ſo debonaire,
I praie to God that evir fall her faire!
For ne had conſort ben of her preſence
I had ben dedde without any defence
For drede of Lov'is wordis and his chere,
As whan time is hereaftir ye ſhall here.
Behinde this god of Love upon the grene
I ſawe coming of ladyis ninetene,
In roial habit, a full eſie pace,
And aftir them of women ſoche a trace
That ſens that God Adam had made of yerth
The thirdè part of mankinde, or the ſerth,
Ne wende I nat by poſſibilite
Had evir in this widè worlde ibe,
And truc of love theſe women were echon:
Now whether was that a wondir thing or non,
That right anon as that thei gonne eſpie
This floure whiche that I clepe the Daiſie,
Full ſodainly thei ſtintin all at ones,
And knelid doune as it were for the nones,
And ſongin with o voice, *Hele and honour*
To trouth of womanhede, and to this flour,
That berith our aldir priſe in figuring,
Her white coroune berith the witneſſing!
And with that worde a compas enviroun
Thei ſittin 'hem full ſoftily adoun:
Firſt ſat the god of Love, and ſith his quene,
With the white coroune, yclad all in grene,
And ſithin all the remnaunt by and by,
As thei were of eſtate, full curtiſly;
Ne nat a worde was ſpokin in the place
The mountenance of a furlong waie of ſpace.
I kneling by this floure in gode entent
Abode to knowin what this peple ment
As ſtill as any ſtone, till at the laſt
This god of Love on me his eyin caſt,
And ſaid, Who knelith there? and I anſwerd
Unto his aſking whan that I it herde,
And ſaied, Sir, It am I, and come him nere,
And ſalued him. (Quod he) What doeſt thou here
So nigh mine owne floure ſo boldily?
It werin bettir worthy truily
A worme to nighin nere my flour than thou.
And why, Sir, (quod I) and it likith you?
For thou (quod he) art therto nothing able;
It is my relike digne and delitable,
And thou my fo, and all my folke werrieſt,
And of mine old ſervauntis thou miſſaieſt,
And hindrift 'hem with thy tranſlacion,
And lettiſt folke from ther devocion
To ſervin me; and holdiſt it folie
To ſervin Love; thou maieſt it nat denie,
For in plain text, withoutin nede of gloſe,
Thou' haſt tranſlatid The Romaunt of the Roſe,
That is an hereſie ayenſt my lawe,
And makiſt wiſe folke fro me to withdrawe;
And of Creſeide thou haſt ſaide as the liſt,
That makith men to women leſſe to triſte,
That ben as trewe as er was any ſtele:
Of thine anſwere aviſin the right wele,
For though that thou renyid haſt my lawe
As othir wretchis have done many' a daie,

By Scint Venus, which that my mothir is,
If that thou live thou ſhalt repentin this
So cruilly that it ſhal wel be ſene.
Tho ſpake this lady, clothid all in grene,
And ſayid, God, right of your curtiſie
Ye mote herkin if that he can replie
Ayenſt al this that ye have to him meved;
A God ne ſhouldè nat be thus agreved,
But of his deite he ſhall be ſtable,
And therto gracious and merciable,
And if ye n'ere a god that knowin all
Than might it be, as I you tellin ſhall,
This man to you maie falſely ben accuſed,
That as by right him oughtin ben excuſed,
For in your court is many' a loſingeour,
And many a queint totoler accuſour
That tabouren in your eris many' a ſoun
Right after ther imaginacioun
To have your daliaunce, and for envy;
Theſe ben the cauſis, and, I ſhal nat lie,
Envie is lave'ndir of the court alwaie,
For ſhe ne partith neithir night ne daie
Out of the houſe of Cæſar, thus ſaith Dant,
Who ſo that goeth algate ſhe wol nat want.
And eke peraunter for this man is nice
He mightin done it, geſſing no malice,
But for he uſith thingis for to make
Him reckith nought of what matir he take,
Or him was bodin makin thilkè twey
Of ſome perſone, and durſt it nat withſey,
Or him repentith uttirly of this,
He ne' hath nat done ſo grevouſly amis
To tranſlatin that oldè clerkis writen,
As though that he of malice would enditen
Diſpite of Love, and had himſelfe it wrought;
This ſhould a rightwiſe lorde have in his thought,
And nat be like tirauntes of Lombardie,
That han no rewarde but at tirannie;
For he that king or lorde is naturel,
Him ought not be a tiraunt ne cruel
As a fermour, to done the harme he can,
He muſt thinkin it is his liegè man,
As is his treſour, and his golde in cofer,
This is the ſentence of the philoſopher;
A kinge to kepe his liegis in juſtice,
Withoutin doutè that is his office,
Al wol he kepe his lordes in ther degre,
As it is right and ſkil that thei ſhoulde be
Enhaunſid and honourid, and moſt dere,
For thei ben halfegoddis in this world here,
Yet mote he done both right to pore and riche,
Al be that ther eſtate be nath both liche,
And have of povir folke compaſſion;
For lo the gentil kinde of the lion!
For whan a flie offendith him or biteth
He with his taile awaie the flie yſmiteth
Al eſily, for of his gentèrie
Him deinith nat to wreke him on a flie,
As doeth a curre or els anothir beſt;
In noble corage ought to ben areſt,
And wayin every thinge by equite,
And have regarde unto his owne degre;
For, Sir, it is no maiſtrie for a lorde
To dampne a man without anſwere of word
And for a lorde that is ful foule to uſe;
And it ſo be he maie him nat excuſe,
But aſkith mercy with a dredeful herte,
And profirith him right in his bare ſherte
To ben right at your ownè jugèment,
Than ought a god by ſhort avisement
Conſidre' his owne honour and his treſpace,
For ſith no cauſe of deth lieth in this caſe
You ought to ben the lightlier merciable:
Lettith your ire, and beth ſomwhat tretable;
The man hath ſervid you of his conninges,
And forthrid well your law in his makinges;
Al be it that he can nat wel endite,
Yet hath he madin leudè folke delite
To ſervin you, in preiſing of your name;
He made the boke that hight The Houſe of Fame,
And eke The Deth of Blaunchè the Ducheſſe,
And The' Parliament of Foulis, as I geſſe,
And al The Love of Palamon and Arcite
Of Thebis, though the ſtorie is knowen lite,
And many an hymne for your holy daies,
That hightin Balades, Rondils, Virèlaies;
And for to ſpeke of othir holineſſe,
He hath in proſe tranſlatid Boece,
And made The Life alſo of Saint Cecile,
He madin alſo, gon is a greate while,
Origines upon the Maudelaine,
Him oughtin now to have the leſè paine;
He hath made many' a ley and many' a thing.
Now as ye be a god and eke a king,
I your Alceſte, whilom Quene of Thrace,
I aſkè you this man right of your grace
That ye him nevir hurte in al his live,
And he ſhal ſwerin to you, and that blive,
He ſhal ner more agiltin in this wiſe,
But ſhal makin as ye wol him deviſe
Of women trewe in loving al their life,
Where ſo ye wol of maidin or of wife,
And forthrin you as muche as he miſſeide
Or in The Roſe, or ellis in Creſeide.
The god of Love anſwerde her thus anon;
Madame, (quod he) it is ſo longe agon
That I you knew ſo charitable' and trewe,
That nevir yet ſithin the worlde was newe
To me ne founde I bettir none than ye;
If that I wol yſavin my degre
I may nor wol nat werne your requeſt;
Al lieth in you; doth with him as you leſt.
I al foryeve withoutin lengir ſpace,
For who ſo yeveth a yefte or doth a grace
Do it betime, his thanke ſhal be the more,
And demith ye what he ſhal do therefore.
Go, thankith now my lady here (quod he.)
I roſe, and down I-ſet me on my kne,
And ſayid thus; Madame, the God above
For yeldè you that ye the god of Love
Have makid me his wrathe to foryeve,
And give me grace ſo longe for to live
That I maie know ſothily what ye be
That have me holpen and put in this degre!
But trewily I wende as in this caas
Nought have agilte ne done to Love treſpas;
For why? a trewè man withoutin drede
Hath nat to partin with a thev'is dede;

Ne a trewe lovir ought me not to blame
Though that I ſpeke a falſe lovir ſome ſhame,
Thei oughtin rather with me for to holde
For that I of Creſeidè wrote or tolde,
Or of the Roſe; what ſo mine author ment
Algatis God wote it was mine entent
To forthrin trouth in love, and it cherice,
And to ben ware fro falſeneſſe and fro vice,
By whiche enſample this was my mening.
And ſhe anſwerde, Let be thine arguing,
For Love ne wol not countirpletid be
In right ne wrong, and lerne that of me:
Thou haſt thy grace, and holde the right therto;
Now woll I ſaine what penaunce thou ſhalt do
For thy treſpace: Underſtandith it here
Thou ſhalt while that thou liviſt yere by yere
The moſtè partie of thy timè ſpende
In making of a glorious Legende
Of Gode Women, both maidinis and wives,
That werin trewe in loving all ther lives,
And tellin of falſe men that 'hem betraien,
That al ther life ne do nat but aſſaien
How many women thei maie done a ſhame,
For in your world that is nat holde a game;
And though that the like nat a lovir be
Speke wel of love, this penaunce yeve I the;
And to the god of Love I ſhal ſo praie
That he ſhal charge his ſervantes by' any waie
To forthrin the, and wel thy labour quite;
Go now thy waie, this penaunce is but lite;
And when this boke is made yeve it the Quene
On my behalfe, at Eltham or at Shenè.
The god of Love gan ſmile, and than he ſeide;
Woſt thou (quod he) wher this be wife or maide,
Or quene or counteſſe, or of what degre,
That hath ſo litill penaunce yevin the,
That haſt deſervid ſorely for to ſmerte?
But pite rennith ſone in gentle herte,
That maiſt thou ſene; ſhe kithith what ſhe is.
And I anſwerde, Naie, Sir, ſo have I blis,
No more but that I ſe wel ſhe is gode.
That is a trewè talè by mine hode
(Quod Love) and that thou knowiſt wel parde,
If it be ſo that thou aviſè the:
Haſt thou nat in a bokè in thy cheſte
The gretè godeneſſe of the Quene Alceſte,
That turnid was into a Däiſie,
She that for her huſbondè cheſe to die,
And eke to gone to hell rathir than he,
And Hercules reſcuid her parde,
And brought her out of hel againe to blis?
And I anſwerde againe, and ſayid, Yes;
Now know I her; and is this gode Alceſte,
The Däieſie, and mine owne hert'is reſte?
Now ſele I wel the godeneſſe of this wife,
That both aftir her deth and in her life
Her gretè bounte doublith her renoun,
Wel hath ſhe quit me mine affectioun
That I have to her floure the Däieſie;
No wondir is though Jove her ſtellifie,
As tellith Agaton, for her godeneſſe,
Her white corowne berith of it witneſſe,
For all ſo many virtuis had ſhe
As ſmal florounis in her crowne be;
In remembraunce of her and in honour
Cybilla made the Däieſie, and the flour
Icrownid all with white, as men maie ſe,
And Mars yave her a corown red parde,
In ſtede of rubies ſet among the white;
Therwith this quene woxe red for ſhame alite
Whan ſhe was praiſid ſo in her preſence.
Than ſayid Love, A ful grete negligence
Was it to the, that ilkè time thou made
(Hide, Abſolon, thy treſſis) in balade,
That thou forgette her in thy ſonge to ſette,
Sith that thou art ſo gretly in her dette,
And wotiſt wel that kalender is ſhe
To any woman that wol lovir be,
For ſhe taught all the crafte of trewe loving,
And namily of wifehode the living,
And all the bondis that ſhe ought to kepe;
Thy litil witte was thilkè time aſlepe;
But now I chargè the upon thy life
That in thy Legende thou make of this wife,
Whan thou haſt othir ſmale imade before;
And ſare now wel, I chargè the no more,
But er I go this muche I wol the tel,
Ne ſhal no trewè lovir come in hel.
Theſe othir ladies ſitting here arowe
Ben in my balade, if thou conſt 'hem knowe,
And in thy bokis al thou ſhalt 'hem finde,
Have 'hem now in thy Legende al in minde,
I mene of them that ben in thy knowing,
For here ben twenty thouſande mo ſitting
Than that thou knowiſt, and gòde women al,
And trewe of love, for ought that maie befal;
Makith the metris of 'hem as the leſte,
I mote gone home, the ſunnè drawith weſte,
To Paradis, with al this companie,
And ſervih alwaie the freſh Däiſie:
At Cleopatra' I wol that thou beginne,
And ſo forthe, and my love ſo ſhalt thou winne;
For let ſe now what man that lovir be
Wol done ſo ſtrong a paine for love as ſhe.
I wote wel that thou maieſt not al it rime
That ſuche loviris diddin in ther time;
It were to longe to redin and to here;
Suffiſith me thou make in this manere,
That thou reherce of al ther life the grete,
Aftir theſe olde authors liſte for to trete;
For who ſo ſhal ſo many' a ſtorie tel
Sey ſhortily, or he ſhal to longe dwell.
And with that worde my bokis gan I take,
And right thus on my Legende gan I make.

HERE BEGINNETH

THE LEGENDE OF CLEOPATRA,

QUENE OF EGYPTE.

After the dethe of Ptolemy the King,
That all Egypt had in his governing,
Reighid his ſuſtir Quene Cleopatras,
Til on a time bifel there ſuche a caas
That out of Rome was ſent a ſenatour
To conquerin relmis, and bring honour
Unto the toune of Rome, as was uſaunce,
To have the worlde at her obëiſaunce,
And, ſothe to ſaie, Antonius was his name.
So fil it, as Fortune him ought a ſhame,
Whan he was fallin in proſperite
Rebel unto the toune of Rome is he,
And or al this the ſuſtir of Cæſare
He left her falſely, er that ſhe was ware,
And would algatis han anothir wife,
For whiche he toke with Rome and Cæſar ſtriſe.
Natheleſſe, for ſothe this ilkè ſenatour
Was a ful worthy gentil werriour,
And of his deth it was ful grete damage;
But Love had brought this man in ſuch a rage,
And him ſo narow boundin in his laas,
And al for the love of Cleopatras,
That al the world he ſet at no value;
Him thought there was nothing to him ſo due
As Cleopatras for to love and ſerve;
Him roughtè nat in armis for to ſterve
In the defence of her and of her right.
This noble Quene eke lovid ſo this knight
Through his deſerte and for his chivalrie,
As certainlie, but if that bokis lie,
He was of perſon and of gentilneſſe,
And of diſcretion and of hardineſſe,
Worthy to any wight that livin maie,
And ſhe was faire as is the roſe in Maie;
And, for to makin ſhorte is the beſt,
She woxe his wife, and had him as her leſt.
The wedding and the feſtè to deviſe,
To me that have itakin ſuche empriſe
Of ſo many a ſtorie for to make,
It were to longe, leſt that I ſhouldè ſlake
Of thing that berith more effecte and charge,
For men maie ovirlade a ſhippe or barge;
And forthy to effecte than wol I ſkippe,
And al the remnaunt I wol let it ſlippe.
Octavian, that wode was of this dede,
Shope him an hoſte on Antony to lede,
Al uttirly for his diſtruction,
With ſtoute Romainis, cruil as lion:
To ſhip thei went; and thus I let 'hem ſaile.
Antonius was ware, and wol not ſaile
To metin with theſe Romaines if he maie,
Toke eke his rede, and both upon a daie
His wife and he, and al his hoſt, forth went
To ſhip anone, no lengir thei ne ſtent,
And in the ſe it happid 'hem to mete;
Up goeth the trumpe, and for to ſhoute and ſhete,
And painin 'hem to ſet on with the ſunne;
With griſly ſoune out goith the grete gonne,
And hertily thei hurtlin al at ones,
And fro the top doune comith the grete ſtones,
In goth the grapinel ſo ful of crokes
Among the ropis ran the ſhering hokes,
In with the polaxe preſith he and he,
Behinde the maſte beginnith he to fle,
And out againe, and drivith him or borde,
He ſtickith him upon his ſper'is orde,
He rent the ſaile with hokis like a ſithe,
He bringeth the cuppe, and biddith 'hem be blith,
He pourith preſen upon the hatchis ſlider,
With pottis ful of lime thei gon togider.
And thus the longe daie in fight thei ſpende,
Til at the laſt, as every thing hath ende,
Antonius is ſhent and put to flight,
And al his folke to go that beſt go might,
Fleeth eke the Quene, with al her purple ſaile,
For ſtrokis whiche that went as thicke as haile;
No wondir was, ſhe might it nat endure:
And whan Antony ſawe that avinture,
Alas (quod he) the daie that I was borne!
My worſhip in this daie thus have I lorne,

And for diſpaire out of his witte he ſterte,
And roſe himſelfe anon throughout the herte
Er that he ferthir went out of the place:
His wife, that could of Cæſar have no grace,
To Egypt fled for drede and for diſtreſſe;
But herkenith, ye that ſpekin of kindeneſſe.
Ye men that falſely ſwerin many' an othe
That ye wol die if that your love be wrothe,
Here maie ye ſene of women ſuch a trouth
This woful Cleopatre' had made ſuche routh
That there n'is tongè none that maie it tel,
But on the' morowe ſhe wol no lengir dwel,
But made her ſubtil werkmen make a ſhrine
Of al the rubies and the ſtonis fine
In al Egypt which that ſhe coulde eſpie,
And ſhe put ful the ſhrine of ſpicèrie,
And lette the corſe enbaume, and forth ſhe fette
This ded corſe, and ſhe in the ſhrine is ſhette;
And next the ſhrine a pit than doth ſhe grave,
And al the ſerpentis that ſhe might have
She put 'hem in that grave. and thus ſhe ſeide;
Now love, to whom my ſorowful hert obeide
So ferforthly, that fro that blisful hour
That I you ſwore to ben al frely your,
I mene you, Antonius, my knight,
That nevir waking in the daie or night
Ye n'ere out of mine hert'is remembraunce,
For wele or wo, for carole or for daunce,
And in my ſelfe this covenant made I tho,
That right ſuche as ye ſeltin, wele or wo,
As ferforth as it in my power laie,
Unreprovable' unto my wifehode aie,
The ſame would I ſelin in life or dethe,
And thilkè covenaunt while me laſtith brethe
I wol fulfil, and that ſhal wel be ſene,
Was ner unto her love a trewir quene;
And with that word nakid, with ful gode hert,
Among the ſerpentes in the pitte ſhe ſtert,
And there ſhe cheſe to have her burying:
Anone the nedirs gonne her for to ſting,
And ſhe her deth recevith with god chere,
For love of Antony that was her dere;
And this is ſtorial ſothe, it is no fable.
Now er I finde a man thus trewe and ſtable,
And wol for love his deth ſo frely take,
I praie God let our hedis nevir ake!

HERE FOLOWETH

THE LEGENDE OF THISBE

OF BABYLONE.

At Babylonè whilom fil it thus,
The whiche toun thè Quene Simiramus
Let dichin al about, and wallis make
Full hie of hardè tilis wel ibake:
There werin dwelling in this noble toun
Two lordis which that were of grete renoun,
And wonidin so nigh upon a grene
That there n'as but a ſtone wal 'hem bitwene,
As oftin in grete tounis is the wonne,
And, ſothe to ſaine, that one man had a ſonne
Of al that londe one of the luſtyiſt,
That othir had a doughtir the fairiſt
That eſtward in the world was tho dwelling;
The name of everiche gan to othir ſpring,
By women that were neighbouris aboute,
For in that countre yet withoutin doute
Maidinis ben ikepte for jelouſie
Ful ſtraitely, leſt thei diddin ſome folie.
This youngè man was clepid Pyramus,
And Thiſbe hight the maide (Naſo ſaith thus)
And thus by reporte was ther name iſhove,
That as thei woxe in age ſo woxe ther love;
And certaine, as by reſon of ther age,
Ther might have ben betwixt 'hem mariage,
But that ther fathirs n'olde it nat aſſent;
And thei in love ylike ſore bothè brent
That none of al ther frendis might it lette,
But privily ſomtimis yet thei mette
By ſleight, and ſpakin ſome of ther deſire,
As wrie the glede and hottir is the fire;
Forbid a love and it' is ten times ſo wode.
This wal which that betwixt 'hem both yſtode
Was cloven atwo right fro the top adoun
Of oldè time of his foundacioun,
But yet this clifte was ſo narow and lite
It was nat ſenè, (dere inough a mite)
But what is that that love can not eſpie?
Ye lovirs two, if that I ſhal nat lie,
Ye foundin firſt this litle narowe clifte,
And with a ſounde as ſofte as any ſhrifte
Thei let ther wordis through the cliſtè pace,
And toldin, while that thei ſtoden in the place,
Al ther complaint of love and al ther wo,
At every time whan thei durſtin ſo.
Upon that one ſide of the wal ſtode he,
And on that other ſidè ſtode Thiſbe,
The ſwete ſoune of othir to receve,
And thus ther wardeins wouldin thei diſceve,
And every daie this wal thei wouldin threte,
And wiſh to God that it were doun ibete;
Thus would thei ſaine, Alas! thou wickid wal,
Thorough thine envie thou us lettiſt al;
Why n'ilt thou cleve or fallin al atwo?
Or at the leſtè, but thou wouldiſt ſo,
Yet wouldiſt thou but onis let us mete,
Or onis that we mightin kiſſin ſwete,
Than were we curid of our caris colde;
But nathèleſſe yet be we to the holde,
In as much as thou ſuffiriſt for to gone
Our wordis through thy lime and eke thy ſtone,
Yet oughtin we with the ben wel apaide.
And whan theſe idil wordis werin ſaide
The coldè wal thei woldin kiſſe of ſtone,
And take ther leve, and forth thei woldin gone,
And this was gladly in the evintide,
Or wondir erly, leſt men it eſpide:
And longè time thei wrought in this manere,
Til on a daie, whan Phœbus gan to clere,
Aurora with the ſtremis of her hete
Had dryid up the dewe of herbis wete,
Unto this clifte, as it was wonte to be,
Come Pyramus, and aſtir come Thiſbe,

And plightin trouth right fully in ther faie,
That ilkè ſamè night to ſtele awaie,
And to begile ther wardeins everichone,
And forth out of the cite for to gone;
And for the feldis ben ſo brode and wide
For to metin in o place at o tide
Thei ſettin markes ther metingis ſhould be
There King Ninus was graven undir a tre,
For olde Painims, that idollis heried,
Uſidin tho in feldis to ben beried;
And faſtè by his grave was a wel,
And ſhortily of this tale for to tel,
This covenaunt was affirmid wondir faſt,
And longe 'hem thoughtin that the ſonnè laſt,
That it n'ere gone undir the ſe adoun.

This Thiſbe hath ſo grete affectioun,
And ſo grete liking Pyramus to ſe,
That whan ſhe ſawe her timè might ybe
At night ſhe ſtale awaie ful privily,
With her face iwimplid full ſubtilly,
For al her frendis (for to ſave her trouthe)
She hath forſake, alas! and that is routhe,
That evir woman would ybe ſo trewe
To truſtin man but ſhe the bet him knewe;
And to the tre ſhe goeth a ful gode pace,
For love made her ſo hardy in this caſe,
And by the welle adoun ſhe gan her dreſſe.
Alas! than comith a wilde lioneſſe
Out of the wode, withoutin more areſt,
With blode mouthe of ſtrangling of a beſt,
To drinkin of the wel there as ſhe ſat;
And whan that Thiſbe had eſpyid that
She riſt her up with a ful drery herte,
And in a cave with dredful ſote ſhe ſterte,
For by the mone ſhe ſawe it wel withall,
And as ſhe ran her wimple let ſhe fall,
And toke none hede, ſo ſore ſhe was awhaped,
And eke ſo glad for that ſhe was eſcaped;
And thus ſhe ſat and lurkith wondir ſtill.
Whan that this lioneſſe hath dronke her fill
Aboutin the well gan ſhe for to winde,
And right anon the wimple gan ſhe finde,
And with her blody mouthe it al to rente;
Whan this was done no lengir ſhe ne ſtente,
But to the wode her way than hath ſhe nome.

And at the laſt this Pyramus is come,
But al to longe, alas! at home was he;
The monè ſhone, men mightin wel iſe;
And in his waie, as that he come ful faſt,
His eyin to the grounde adoun he caſt,
And in the ſonde, as he behelde adoun,
He ſaw the ſteppis brode of a lioun,
And in his hert he ſodainly agroſe,
And pale he wexte, therwith his hert aroſe,
And nere he came, and founde the wimple torne;
Alas (quod he) the daie that I was borne!
This o night wol both us loviris ſle;
How ſhould I aſkin mercy of Thiſbe
Whan I am he that have you ſlaine? alas!
My biding hath you ſlainè in this caas:
Alas! to bidde a woman gone by night
In placè there as perill fallin might,
And I ſo ſlowe: alas! I ne had be
Here in this place a ſurlonge waie er ye.
Now what lioun that is in this foreſt
My body mote he rentin, or what beſt
That wilde is, gnawin mote he now mine herte.
And with that worde he to the wimple ſterte,
And kiſte it ofte, and wepte on it ful ſore,
And ſaid, Wimple, alas! there n'is no more,
But thou ſhalt ſele as well the blode of me
As thou haſt felte the bleding of Thiſbe:
And with that worde he ſmote him to the herte,
The blode out of the wounde as brode aſterte
As watir, whan the conduite brokin is.

Now Thiſbe, which that ne wiſt not of this,
But ſitting in her drede ſhe thoughtè thus,
Yf it ſo fallin that my Pyramus
Be comen hithir, and may me nat ifinde,
He maie me holdin falſe and eke unkinde.
And out ſhe cometh, and aftir him gan ſpien
Both with her hertè and eke with her eien,
And thought I wol him tellin of my drede
Both of the lioneſſe and of my dede;
And at the laſt her love than hath ſhe founde
Ybeting with his helis on the grounde
Al blody', and therwithal abacke ſhe ſterte,
And like the wawis quappe began her herte,
And pale as boxe ſhe woxe, and in a throwe
Aviſid her, and gan him wel to knowe,
That it was Pyramus, her hertè dere:
O! who could writin whiche a dedly chere
Hath Thiſbe now! and how her here ſhe rent,
And how ſhe gan her ſelfin to turment,
And how ſhe lieth and ſwounith on the ground,
And how ſhe wept of teris ful his wounde,
How medlith ſhe his blode with her complaint,
How with her blod her ſelvin gan ſhe paint,
How clippith ſhe the red ded corſe, alas!
How doth this woful Thiſbe in this caas,
How kiſſith ſhe his froſty mouthe ſo colde!
Who hath don this? and who hath ben ſo bolde
To ſleen my life? o! ſpeke my Pyramus,
I am thy Thiſbe that the callith thus;
And therwithal ſhe liftith up his hed.

This wofull man, that was nat fully ded,
Whan that he herde the name of Thiſbe crien,
On her he caſt his hevy dedly eyen,
And doun againe, and yeldith up the goſt.

Thiſbe riſt up withoutin noiſe or boſt,
And ſaw her wimple and his empty ſheth,
And eke his ſwerde, that him hath don to deth,
Than ſpake ſhe thus; My woful hande (quod ſhe)
Is ſtronge inough in ſuche a werke to me,
For love ſhal yeve me ſtrength and hardineſſe
To make my woundè large inough I geſſe;
I wol the folowen ded, and I wol be
Felawe and cauſe eke of thy deth, (quod ſhe)
And though that nothing ſave the deth only
Might the fro me departin trewily,
Thou ſhalt no more departin now fro me
Than fro the deth, for I wol go with the.

And now, ye wretchid jelouſe fathirs our,
We that ywerin whilom childrin your,
We prayin you withoutin more envie
That in o gravè we both motin lie,
Sens love hath brought us to this pitous ende:
And rightwiſe God to every lovir ſende,

That lovith trewly, more proſperite
Than evir had Pyramus and Thiſbe,
And let no gentil woman her aſſure
To puttin her in ſuche an avinture:
But God forbid but that a woman can
Ben as true and as loving as a man,
And for my part I ſhal anon it kith;
And with that word his ſwerd ſhe tokè ſwith,
That warme was of her lov'is blode and hote,
And to the hertè ſhe her ſelvin ſmote.

And thus are Thiſbe' and Pyramus ago:
Of trewè men I findin but fewe mo
In al my bokis ſave this Pyramus,
And therfore have I ſpokin of him thus,
For it is deinte to us men to finde
A man that can in love be trewe and kinde.
Here maie ye ſene, what lovir ſo he be,
A woman dare and can as wel as he.

HERE FOLOWETH

THE LEGENDE OF DIDO

QUENE OF CARTHAGE.

GLORIE and honour, Virgile Mantuan,
Be to thy name, and I ſhal as I can
Folowe thy lanterne as thou goeſt beforne,
How Æneas to Dido was forſworne
In thine Æneide, and Naſo wol I take
The ten ur and the gret effectis make.
Whan Troee ybrought was to diſtruction
By Grekis ſleight, and namely by Sinon
Faning the horſe offrid unto Minerve,
Thrugh which that many a Trojan muſt ſterve,
And Hector had aftir his deth apered,
And fire ſo wode that it might nat ben ſtered,
In al the noble toure of Illion,
That of the cite was the cheſe dongeon,
And al the countre was ſo lowe ibrought,
And Priamus the king fordone and nought,
And Æneas was chargid by Venus
To flien awaie, he toke Aſcanius,
That was his ſon, in his right hande and fledde,
And on his backe he bare and with him ledde
His oldè fathir clepid Anchiſes,
And by the waie his wife Creuſa he leſe;
And mokil ſorow had he in his minde
Er that he could his felawſhip yfinde,
But at the laſt, whan he had 'hem yfounde,
He made 'hem redy in a certaine ſtounde,
And to the ſe ful faſt he gan him hie,
And failith forth with al his companie
Towards Itaile, as wold Deſtine:
But of his aventuris in the ſe
N'is nat to purpoſe for to ſpeke of here,
For t accordith nat to my matere;
But as I ſa.d, of him and of Dido
Shal be my talè til that I have do.
So long he failid in the ſaltè ſe
Til in Libye unneth arrivid he
With ſhippis ſevin, and no more navie,
And glad he was to londè for to hie,
So was he with the tempeſt al to ſhake;
And whan that he the havin had itake
He had a knight was callid Achates,
And him of all his felowſhip he cheſe
To gon with him the countre for t'eſpie,
He ne toke with him no more companie.
But forthe thei gon, and left his ſhippis ride,
His fere and he, withoutin any guide.
So long he walkith in this wildirneſſe;
Till at the laſt he met an huntirèſſe;
A bowe in honde and arowis had ſhe,
Her clothis cuttid were unto the kne,
But ſhe was yet the fairiſt creature
That evir was iformid by Nature,
And Æneas and Achates ſhe grette,
And thus ſhe to 'hem ſpake whan ſhe 'hem met:
Saw ye, (quod ſhe) as ye han walkid wide,
Any of my ſuſtrin walke you beſide
With any wild bore or othir beſt,
That thei have huntid to in this foreſt,
Ituckid up, with arowes in ther caas?
Naie, ſothly, ladie, (quod this Æneas)
But by thy beaute, as it thinkith me,
Thou mightiſt nevir yerthly woman be,
But Phœbus ſuſtir art thou as I geſſe,
And if ſo be that thou be a goddeſſe
Have mercie on our labour and our wo.
I n'am no goddeſſe ſoth ly, quod ſhe tho,
For maidins wa kin in this countre here
With arowes and with bow in this manere;
This is the relme of Libye there ye b n,
Of whiche that Dido ladie is and quene;
And ſhortly tolde all the occaſion
Why Dido came into that region,

Of whiche as now me liſtith nat to rhime;
It nedith nat; it n'ere but loſſe of time;
For this is all and ſome, it was Venus,
His ownè mothir, that ſpake with him thus:
And to Carthage ſhe bade he ſhould him dight,
And vaniſhid anon out of his ſight.
I could folowin worde for worde Virgile,
But it would laſtin all to longè while.

This noble Quene, that clepid was Dido,
That whilom was the wife of Sichæo,
That fairir was by ferr than the bright ſonne,
This noble toune of Carthage hath begonne,
In whiche ſhe reignith in ſo grete honour
That ſhe was holdin of all quenis flour
Of gentilleſſe, of fredome, and beaute,
That well was him that might her onis ſe,
Of kingis and of lordis ſo deſired,
That all the worlde her beautie had ifired,
She ſtode ſo well in every wight'is grace.

Whan Æneas was come unto the place,
Unto the maiſtirtemple' of all the toun,
There Dido was in her devocioun,
Full privily his waie than hath he nome:
Whan he was into the large temple come
I can not ſaine if that it be poſſible,
But Venus had him makid inviſible,
Thus ſaith the boke, withoutin any leſe.

And whan this Æneas and Achates
Haddin in this temple ben ovir all,
Than foundin thei depaintid on a wall
How Troie and all the lande deſtroyid was;
Alas that I was borne! (quod Æneas)
Thorough the world our ſhame is kid ſo wide,
Now it is paintid upon every ſide:
All we that werin in proſperite
Ben now diſclaundrid, and in ſoche degre,
No lengir for to livin I ne kepe;
And with that word he braſt out for to wepe
So tendirly that routh it was to ſene.

This freſhè ladie, of the citie Quene,
Stode in the temple' in her eſtate roiall,
So richily and eke ſo faire withall,
So yong, ſo luſtie, with her eyin glade,
That if that God that hevin and yerth made
Would have a love, for beaute and godeneſſe,
And womanhede, and trouth and ſemelineſſe,
Whom ſhould he lovin but this ladie ſwete?
There n'is no woman to him half ſo mete.
Fortune, that hath the world in govirnaunce,
Hath ſodainly brought in ſo newe a chaunce
That nevir was there yet ſo frened a caas,
For all the companie of Æneas,
Which that we wenid have lorne in the ſe,
Arivid is nought ferre fro that cite,
For whiche the gretis of his lordis ſome
By avinture ben to the cite come,
Unto that ſamè temple for to ſeke
The Quene, and of her ſocour her beſeke,
Soche renome was ther ſprong of her godenes.

And whan that thei had tolde all ther diſtreſs,
And all ther tempeſt and all ther hard caſe,
Unto the Quene apperid Æneas,
And opinly beknewe that it was he;
Who haddin joiè than but his meine,
That haddin found ther lorde, ther govirnour?

The Quene ſaw that thei did him ſoche honour,
And had herd oft of Æneas er tho,
And in her hertè ſhe had routhe and wo
That evir ſoche a noble man as he
Shall ben diſheritid in ſoche degre,
And ſawe the man that he was like a knight,
And ſuffiſaunt of perſone and of might,
And like to ben a very gentilman,
And well his wordis he beſettin can,
And had a noble viſage for the nones,
And formid well of brawne and eke of bones,
And aftir Venus had ſoche fairèneſſe
That no man might be halfe ſo faire I geſſe,
And well a lorde him ſemid for to be;
And for he was a ſtraungir, ſomwhat ſhe
Ylikid him the bet, as God doe bote,
To ſome folk oftin newè thing is ſote;
Anon her herte hath pitie of his wo,
And with that pite love ycame alſo;
And thus for pite and for gentilneſſe
Refreſhid muſt he ben of his diſtreſſe.

She ſayid certis that ſhe ſorie was
That he hath had ſoche perill and ſoch caas,
And in her frendly ſpeche in this manere
She to him ſpake, and ſaied as ye maie here:

Be ye nat Venus ſonne and Anchiſes?
In gode faith all the worſhip and encreſe
That I maie godely doen you ye ſhall have;
Your ſhippis and your meinè ſhall I ſave;
And many' a gentill wordc ſhe ſpake him to,
And commaundid her meſſangirs to go
The ſamè daie withoutin any faile
His ſhippis for to ſeke and 'hem vitaile:
Full many' a beſt ſhe to the ſhippis ſent,
And with the wine ſhe gan 'hem to preſent,
And to her roiall paleis ſhe her ſpedde,
And Æneas alwaie with her ſhe ledde.

What nedith you the feſtis to diſcrive?
He nevir bet at eſe was in his live;
Full was the feſt of deinties and richeſſe,
Of inſtrumentes, of ſong, and of gladneſſe,
And many' an amo'rous loking and deviſe.

This Æneas is come to paradiſe
Out of the ſwolowe' of hell, and thus in joie
Remembrith him of his eſtate in Troie.
To daunſing chambris full of paramentes,
Of richè beddis and of ornamentes,
This Æneas is ledde aftir the mete;
And with the Quene whan that he had yſete,
And ſpicis partid, and the wine agon,
Unto his chambir was he lad anon
To take his eſe and for to have his reſt,
With all his folke to doen what ſo 'him leſt.

There ne was courſir well ibridlid none,
Ne ſtedè for the juſting well to gone,
Ne largè paulfrey eſie for the nones,
Ne jewill yfret full of richè ſtones,
Ne ſackis full of gold, of largè wight,
Ne rubie none that ſhinith bright by night,
Ne gentill hautin faukon heronere,
Ne hounde for harte, or wildè bore, or dere,
Ne cuppe of gold, with floreins newe ibette,
That in the londe of Libye maie ben gette

That Dido ne' hath Æneas it iſent,
And all is payid what that he hath ſpent.
Thus gan this worthy Quene her geſtis call,
As ſhe that can in fredome paſſin all.
Æneas ſothely eke, withoutin leſe,
Hath ſent to his ſhippis by Achates
Aftir his ſonne, and aftir richè thinges,
Both ſceptre, clothis, brochis, and eke ringes,
Some for to were, and ſome for to preſent
To her that all theſe noble things him ſent,
And bad his ſonne how that he ſhould ymake
The preſenting, and to the Quene it take.
Repairid is this Achates again,
And Æneas full blisfull is and fain
To ſein his yonge ſonne Aſcanius,
For unto him it was reportid thus,
That Cupido, that is the god of Love,
At prayir of his mothir hie above,
Yhad the likeneſſe of the childe itake,
This noble Quene enamoured for to make
On Æneas; but as to that ſcripture,
Be as be maie, I make of it no cure;
But ſoth is this, the Quene hath made ſoch chere
Unto this childe that wondir was to here,
And of the preſent that his fathir ſent
She thankid him full oft in gode entent.
Thus is this Quene in pleſaunce and in joie
With all theſe newè luſtie folke of Troie,
And of the dedis hath ſhe mere enquered
Of Æneas, and all the ſtorie lered
Of Troie, and all the longè daie thei twaie
Entendidin for to ſpeke and to plaie,
Of whiche there gan to bredin ſoche a fire,
That ſelie Dido hath now ſoche deſire
With Æneas her newè geſt to dele
That ſhe hath loſt her hewe and eke her hele.
Now to the' effect, now to the fruite, of all
Why I have told this ſtorie' and tellin ſhall.
Thus I beginne. It fell upon a night,
Whan that the mone upreiſid had her light,
This noble Quene unto her reſt ywent,
She ſighid ſore, and gone her ſelf tourment,
She walkith, waloweth, and made many braied,
As doen theſe lovirs, as I have herd ſaied,
And at the laſte unto her ſuſtir Anne
She made her mone, and right thus ſpake ſhe than:
Now, derè ſuſtir mine! what maie it be
That me agaſtith in my dreme? (quod ſhe)
This ilke newe Trojan is ſo in my thought,
For that me thinketh he it ſo well iwrought,
And eke ſo likely for to ben a man,
And therwithall ſo milkill gode he can,
That all my love and life lieth in his cure;
Have ye nat herd him tell his avinture?
Now certis, Anne, if that ye redè me,
I woldin fain to him iweddid be;
This is the effect; what ſhould I more ſeine?
In him lieth all to doe me live or deine.
Her ſuſtir Anne, as ſhe that coud her gode,
Said as her thought, and ſomdele it withſtode;
But hereof was ſo long a ſermoning
It were to long to makin reherſing;
But finally, it maie not be withſtonde,
Love woll ylove, for no wight woll it wonde;
The dawning upriſt out of the ſalte ſe,
This amorous Quene chargith her meinè
The nettis dreſſe, and ſperis brode and kene,
An hunting woll this luſtie freſhè Quene,
So prikith her this newè jolie wo;
To horſe is all her luſtie folke igo,
Unto the court the houndis ben ibrought,
And upon coarſir ſwift as any thought
Her yongè knightis hevin all about,
And of her women eke an hugè rout:
Upon a thickè palfraie, papirwhite,
With ſadill redde, enbroudid with delite,
Of golde the barris, up enboſſid high,
Sate Dido, all in golde and perreywrigh,
And ſhe is faire as is the brightè morowe
That helith ſick folkis of night'is ſorowe,
Upon a courſir ſtartlin as the fire,
Men mightin tourne him with a little wire.
But Æneas, like Phœbus to deviſe,
So was he freſh arayid in his wiſe,
The ſomie bridill, with the bitte of gold,
Govirnith he right as himſelf hath would;
And forthe this noble Quene, this ladie, ride
On hunting, with this Trojan by her ſide.
The herde of hartis foundin is anon,
With Hey go bet, pricke thou, let gon, let gon!
Why n'il the lion comin or the bere,
That I might him ones metin with this ſpere?
Thus ſain this yongè folke, and up thei kill
The wilde hartis, and have 'hem at thèr will.
Emong all this to romblin gan the heven,
The thondir rorid with a griſly ſteven,
Doun come the rain, with haile and ſlet ſo faſt,
With hevin's fire, that made ſo ſore agaſt
This noble Quene and alſo her mainè,
That eche of 'hem, was glade awaie to ſle;
And, ſhortly, fro the tempeſt her to ſave
She fled her ſelf into a little cave,
And with her went this Æneas alſo,
I n'ot with 'hem if ther went any mo,
The auctour makith ofit no mencion;
And here began the depe affection
Betwixt 'hem two; this was the firſtè morowe
Of her gladneſſe and ginning of her ſorowe,
For there hath Æneas iknelid ſo,
And tolde her all his hert and all his wo,
And ſworne ſo depè to her to be true
For well or wo, and chaungin for no newe,
And as a falſe lovir ſo well can plain,
That ſelie Dido rewid on his pain,
Toke him for huſbond, and became his wife
For evirmore, while that 'hem laſt ſhulde life;
And aftir this, when that the tempeſt ſtentè,
With mirth out as thei came homward thei went;
The wickid fame uproſe, and that anon,
How Æneas hath with the Quene igon
Into the cave, and demid as 'hem liſt;
And whan the King (that Yarbas hight) it wiſt,
As he that had her loved evir his life,
And wowid her to havin to his wife,
Soche ſorow' as he hath makid and ſoche chere
It is a routhe and pity for to here;
But as in love all daie it happith ſo
That one ſhall laughin at an othir's wo,

Now laughith Æneas, and is in joie
And more richeſſe than evir was in Troie.
O ſelie woman, full of innocence,
Full of pite, of truthe, and continence!
What makid you to men to truſtin ſo?
Have ye ſoche routhe upon ther fainid wo
And have ſoche old enſamplis you beforne?
Se ye nat all how that thei ben forſworne?
Where ſe ye one that he ne' hath lafte his leſe,
Or ben unkinde, or doen her ſome miſcheſe,
Or pillid her, or boſtid of his dede?
Ye maie as well it ſene as ye maie rede.
Takith hede now of this grete gentilman,
This Trojan, that ſo well her pleſin can,
That fainith him ſo true and obeiſing,
So gentill and ſo privie' of his doing.
And can ſo well doen all his obeiſaunce,
And waitith her at feſtis and at daunce,
And whan ſhe goeth to temple' and home again,
And faſtin till he hath his ladie ſein,
And berin in his deviſis for her ſake
N'ot I nat what, and ſongis would he make,
Juſtin, and doen of armis many thinges,
Sende her lettirs, tokins, brochis, and ringes.
Now herkenith how he ſhal his lady ſerve:
There as he was in perill for to ſterve
For hungir and for miſcheſe in the ſe,
And deſolate, and fledde fro his countre,
And all his folke with tempeſt all to driven,
She hath her body and eke her relme yeven
Into his honde, there as ſhe might have ben
Of othir land than of Carthage a quene,
And lived in joy inough; what would ye more?
This Æneas, that hath thus depe iſwore,
Is werie of his craft within a throwe,
And the hote erneſt is all ovirblowe,
And privily he doeth his ſhippis dight,
And ſhapith him to ſtele awaie by night.
This Dido hath ſuſpection of this,
And thoughtin well that it was all amis,
For in his bedde he lieth anight and ſiketh:
She aſkith him anon, What the miſliketh,
My der herte! whiche that I lovin moſte?
Certis (quod he) this night my fathir's ghoſte
Hath in my ſlepe me ſo ſorely tourmented,
And eke Mercurie's his meſſage hath preſented,
That nedis to the conqueſt of Itaile
My deſtinie is ſone for to faile,
For which me thinkith broſtin is mine hert;
Therwith his falſe teris out thei ſtert,
And takith her within his armis two.
Is that in erneſt? (quod ſhe) woll ye ſo?
Have ye no ſworne to wife me for to take?
Alas! what woman woll ye of me make?
I am a gentill woman and a quene,
Ye woll not fro your wife thus foul yflene?
That I was borne alas! what ſhall I do?
To telle in ſhort, this noble Quene Dido
She ſekith halowes and doeth ſacrifice,
She knelith, crieth, that routh is to deviſe,
Conjurith him, and profe'rith him to be
His thrall, his ſervaunt, in the beſt degre,
She fallith him to ſote, and ſownith there,
Diſchevilid with her bright gildid here,
And ſaieth, Have mercy! let me with you ride,
Theſe lordis whiche that wonnin me beſide
Woll me deſtroyin only for your ſake;
And if ye wolle me now to wife ytake
As ye have ſworne, than woll I yeve you leve
Te ſlaen me with your ſwerde now ſon at eve,
For than yet ſhall I dyin as your wife;
I am with childe, and yeve my childe his life:
O mercie, Lorde! have pite in your thought.
But all this thing availith her right nought,
For on a night he ſleping let her lie,
And ſtole awaye into his company,
And as a traitour forthe he gan to ſaile
Towardis the large countre of Itaile:
And thus hath he left Dido' in wo and pine,
And weddid there a ladie hight Lavine.
A clothe he laft, and eke his ſworde ſtanding,
Whan he fro Dido ſtale in her ſleping,
Right at her bedd'is hedde, ſo gan he hie
Whan that he ſtale awaie to his navie.
Which cloth whan ſelie Dido gan awake
She hath it kiſte ful oftin for his ſake,
And ſaid, Swete cloth! while Jupiter it leſt
Take my ſoule, unbinde me of this unreſt,
I have fulfilled of Fortune all the courſe:
And thus, alas! withoutin his ſocourſe
Twentie timis iſwounid heth ſhe than.
And whan that ſhe unto her ſuſtir Anne
Complainid had of which I maie not write,
So grete routh I have it for to endite,
And bad her norice and her ſuſtrin gon
To fetchin fire and othir thinges anon,
And ſayid that ſhe wouldè ſacrifie;
And whan ſhe might her timè well aſpie
Upon the fire of ſacrifice ſhe ſterte,
And with his ſworde ſhe roſe her to the herte:
But as mine auctour ſaith yet this ſhe ſeide,
Or ſhe was hurtin, beforne or ſhe deide,
She wrote a lettre' anon, and thus began;
Right ſo (quod ſhe) as the milkwhitè ſwan
Ayenſt his deth beginnith ſor to ſing,
Right ſo to you I make my complaining,
Not that I trowe to gettin you again,
For well I wote that it is al in vain,
Sens that the goddes ben contrarious to me,
But ſin my name is loſt through you (quod ſhe)
I maie well leſe a worde on you or letter,
All be it I ſhall be nevir the better,
For thilkè wind that blewe your ſhip awaie
The ſamè winde hath blowe awaie your faie:
But who ſo wol al this lettre' have in minde
Rede Ovide, and in him he ſhall it finde,

HERE FOLOWETH

THE LEGENDE OF HYPSIPYLE AND MEDEA.

Thou rote of falſe loviris, Duke Jaſon,
Thou fleer, devourir, and confuſion,
Of gentill women, gentil creāturcs,
Thou madiſt thy reclaiming and thy lures
To ladies of thy ſcathliche aparaunce,
And of thy wordis farfid with plefaunce,
And of thy fainid trouth and thy manere,
With thine obeïſaunce and humble chere,
And with thine counterfeitid pain and wo,
There othir falſin one thou falſid two.
O! oftin ſwore thou that thou woldiſt die
For love whan thou ne feltiſt maladie
Save ſoule delite, whiche that thou calliſt love:
If that I live thy name ſhall be yſhove
In Engliſhe, that thy deceipt ſhall be knowe:
Have at the, Jaſon; now thin horn is blow.
But certis it is bothè routh and wo
That Love with ſa ſè lovirs werkith ſo,
For thei ſhal have well bettir love and chere
Than he that hath aboughtin love full dere,
Or had in armis many' a bloodie boxe,
For ay as tendre' a capon eteth the fox,
Though he be fals, and hath the ſoule betraied,
As ſhall the gode man that therefore hath paied;
Although he have to the' capon ſkill and right
The falſè foxe woll have his part at night:
On Jaſon this enſample' is well iſene
By Hypſipyle' and Medea the quene.

In Theſſalie, as Ovide tellith us,
There was a knight that hightin Pelus,
That had a brothir whiche that hight Æſon;
And whan for age he might unnethis gon
He yave to Peleus the govirning
Of all his reigne, and made him lorde and king;
Of whiche Æſon this Jaſon gettin was,
That in his time in all that land there n'as
Nat ſoche a famous knight of genti leſſe,
Of fredome, of ſtrengthe, and of luſtineſſe.
Aftir his fathir's deth be bare him ſo
That there n'as none that liſt to ben his foe,
But did him all honour and companie,
Of whiche this Peleus hath grete envie,
Imagining that Jaſon might ybe
Enhaunſid ſo, and put in ſoche degre,
With love of lordis of his regioun,
That from his reigne he maie be put adoun,
And in his wit anight compaſſid he
How this Jaſon might beſt diſtroyid be,
Withoutin ſclaundir of his compaſment;
And at the laſt he toke aviſement
That to ſende him into ſome ferre countre,
Theras this Jaſon maie diſtroyid be:
This was his wit, all made he to Jaſon
Grete chere of loke and of affection,
For drede leſt that his lordis it eſpide.
And ſo bifell it, as fame ronnith wide,
There was ſoche tiding or all, and ſoche loos,
That in an iſle that callid was Colchos,
That ſtonte beyonde Troie eſtward in the ſe,
There was a Ram which that men mightin ſe
That had a Flees of Golde that ſhone ſo bright
That no where was there ſoche an othir ſight;
But it was kept alwaie with a dragoun,
And many othir marvailes up and doun,
And with two bullis makid all of bras,
That ſpittin fire, and mochil thing ther was;
But this was eke the tal nathèles,
That who ſo would ywinnin thilkè Flees
He muſt bothe, or that he it winnin might,
With the bullis and with the dragon fight.

And King Oëtus lorde was of that ile.
This Peleus bethought upon this while
That he his nevewe Jaſon would exhort
To ſailin to that londe him to diſport,
And ſayid, Nevewe, if it might ybe
That ſoche a worſhip might befallin the

That thou this famous treſure mightiſt win,
And bringin it my region within,
It were to me grete pleſaunce and honour,
Than were I holdin to quite thy labour,
And all thy coſtis I woll my ſelf make,
And cheſith what ſolke thou wolt with the take:
Let ſe now, darſte thou takin this voiage?
Jaſon was young, and luſtie of corage,
And undirtoke to doen this ilke empriſe;
Anon Argus his ſhippis gan deviſe.

With Jaſon went the ſtrong ſtout Hercules,
And many' an othir that he with him ches;
But who ſo aſkith who is with him gon
Let him rede the boke Argonauticon,
For he wol tel a tale long inough.
Philocretes anon the ſaile up drough,
Whan that the winde was gode, and gan him hie
Out of his countre callid Theſſalie.
So long thei ſailid in the ſalte ſe
Till in the ile of Lemnos arived he,
All be this nat reherſid of Guido,
Yet ſaieth Ovide in his Epiſtlis ſo;
And of this ileland ladie was and quene
The faire and yonge Hypſipyle the ſhene,
That whilom Thoas doughter was, the king.

Hypſipyle was gon in her playing,
And roming on the clevis by the ſe;
Undir a banke anone eſpyid ſhe
Where laie the ſhippe that Jaſon gon arive;
Of her godeneſſe adoune ſhe ſendith blive
To wetin if that any ſtraungè wight
With tempeſt thidir were iblowe anight,
To doen 'hem ſoeour, as was her uſaunce
To furth'rin every wight, and don pleſaunce
Of very bounte and of curtiſie.

This meſſangir adoune him gan to hie,
And ſounde Jaſon and Hercules alſo,
That in a cogge to londe werin igo
'Hem to refreſhin and to take the aire,
The morowning attempre was and faire,
And in ther waie this meſſangir 'hem mette;
Full conningly theſe lordis two he grette,
And did his meſſage, aſking 'hem anon
If thei wer brokin or ought wo bigon,
Or had nede of lodeſmen or of vitaile?
For of ſuccour they ſhouldin nothing faile,
For it was uttirly the Quen'is will.

Jaſon anſwerid mekely and ſtill,
My ladie (quod he) thanke I hertily
Of her godeneſſe: us nedith truily
Nothing as now, but that we werie be,
And comin for to plaie out of the ſe
Till that the winde be bettir in our waie.

This ladie romith by the cliffe to plaie,
With her meinè, endlong upon the ſtronde,
And findith Jaſon and this othir ſtonde
In ſpeking of this thing, as I you told.

This Hercules and Jaſon gan behold
How that the Quene it was, and faire her grete,
Anon right as thei with this ladie mete,
And ſhe toke hede, and knewe by ther manere,
By ther araie, by wordis, and by chere,
That it were gentillmen of grete degre,
And to the caſtle with her ledith ſhe
Theſe ſtraungè folke, and doith 'hem grèt honor
And aſkith 'hem of travaile and of labor
That thei have ſuffrid in the ſaltè ſe;
So that within a daie, or two or thre,
She knewe by the' folke that in his ſhippis be
That it was Jaſon, full of renomè,
And Hercules, that had the gretè loos,
That ſoughtin the aventures of Colchos,
And did 'hem honour morè than before,
And with 'hem deled evir longir the more,
For thei ben worthy ſolke withoutin leſe,
And namely moſte ſhe ſpake with Hercules,
To him her herte ſhe bare, an he ſhould be
Sadde, wiſe, and true, of wordis aviſè,
Withoutin any othir affection
Of love, or othir imaginacion.

This Hercules hath this Jaſon ſo preiſed,
That to the ſunnè he hath him up reiſed,
That halfe ſo true a man there n'as of love
Undir the cope of heven that is above,
And he was wiſe, hardie, ſecrete, and riche,
Of theſe iii pointis there n'as non him liche,
Of fredome paſſid he and luſtie hedde
All tho that livin and all tho ben dedde,
Thereto ſo grete a gentillman was he,
And of Theſſalie likely king to be;
There n'as no lacke but that he was agaſt
To love, and for to ſpekin ſhamèfaſt;
Him had levir himſelf murdir and die
Than that men ſhouldè a lovir him eſpie,
As woldè God above that I had give
My blode and fleſhe, ſo that I might live
With the bones, that he had aught where a wife
For his eſtate, for ſoche a luſtie life
She ſhouldin ledin with this luſtie knight:
And all this was compaſſid on the night
Betwixin Jaſon and this Hercules:
Of both theſe two here was a ſhreudè leſe,
To come to houſe upon an innocent,
For to bedote this Quene was ther entent.
And Jaſon is as coie as is a maide;
He lokith pitouſly, but naught he ſaied;
But frely yave he to her counſailers
Yeftis full grete and to her officers,
As would God that I leſir had and time
By proceſſe all his woeing for to rime;
But in this houſe if a falſe lovir be,
Right as himſelf now doeth right ſo did he
With faining and with every ſubtill dede:
Ye get no more of me but ye woll rede
Th' originall, that tellith all the caas.

The ſothe is this, that Jaſon weddid was
Unto this Quene, and toke of her ſubſtaunce
What ſo him liſt unto his purveiaunce;
And upon her begate he childrin two,
And drough his ſaile, and ſawe her nevir mo.
A lettir ſent ſhe unto him certain,
Which were to long to writtin and to ſain,
And him reprovith of his grete untrouth,
And prayith him on her to have ſome routh,
And on his childrin two: ſhe ſaid him this,
That thei be like of allè thing iwis
To Jaſon, ſave that thei couth nat begile;
And prayid God or it were longè while

That ſhe that had his herte ireft her fro
Mote findin him untrue and falſe alſo,
And that ſhe muſtè both her childrin ſpill,
And allè tho that ſuffrith him his will.
And true to Jaſon was ſhe all her life,
And evir kept her chaſte as for his wife,
Ne nevir had ſhe joiè at her herte,
But dyid for his love of ſorowes ſmerte.
To Colchis comin is this Duke Jaſon,
That is of love devourir and dragon,
As matire appetitith forme alwaie,
And from forme into forme it paſſin maie,
Or as a wellè that were botomles;
Right ſo can falſè Jaſon have no pees
For to deſirin through his appetite
To doen with gentillwoman his delite;
This is his luſte and his felicite.
Jaſon is romid forthe to the cite
That whilom clepid was Jaſonicos,
That was the maiſtirtoune of all Colchos,
And hath itolde the cauſe of his coming
Unto Æœta, of that countre king,
Praying him that he muſt doen his aſſaie
To gette the Flece of Golde if that he maie,
Of whiche the King aſſentith to his bone,
And doth him honour as it is to done,
So ferforth that his doughtir and his heire
Medea, whiche that was ſo wiſe and faire,
That fairir ſawe there nevir man with eye,
He made her doen to Jaſon companie
At mete, and ſittin by him in the hall.
Now was Jaſon a ſemely man withall,
And like a lorde, and had a grete renoun,
And of his loke roiall as a lioun,
And godelie of his ſpeche and familiere,
And coud of love the craft and art plenere
Withoutin boke, with everiche obſervaunce;
And as Fortune her ought a foule miſchaunce
She woxe enamorid upon this man.
Jaſon, (quod ſhe) for ought I ſe or can
As of this thing the whiche ye ben about,
Ye and your ſelf ye put in mochil doubt,
For who ſo woll this avinture atcheve
He maie nat wele aſtertin as I leve
Withoutin deth, but I his helpè be;
But nathèles it is my will (quod ſhe)
To ſorthrin you ſo that ye ſhall nat die,
But turnin ſounde home to your Theſſalie.
My right fair lady! (quod this Jaſon tho)
That ye have of my deth or of my wo
Any regarde, and doen me this honour,
I wot wel that my might ne my labour
May nat deſervin it my liv'is daie;
God thankè you there I ne can ne maie;
Your man am I, and lowely you beſeche
To ben my helpe withoutin morè ſpeche;
But certis for my deth ſhal I not ſpare.
Tho gan this Medea to him declare
The peril of this caſe fro point to point,
Of his batyle, and eke in what disjoynt
He motè ſtondin, of wniche no creture
Save onley ſhe ne might his lyfe aſſure:
And ſhortly, right to the poynt for to go,
They ben accordid full betwyxe 'hem two
That Jaſon ſhall her wedde as her true knighte,
And terme yſet to comin ſone at night
Unto her chambre, and make there his othe
Upon the goddes, that he for leſe or lothe
Ne ſhulde her nevir falſin nyght ne daye
To ben her huſbonde whyle he lyvin maye,
As ſhe that from his deth him ſavid here;
And hereupon at night they mete yfere,
And doth his othe, and goth with her to bedde;
And on the morewe upwarde he him ſpedde,
For ſhe hath taught him how he ſhal nat fayle
The Flees to wynne and ſtintin his bataile,
And ſavid hym his life and his honour,
And gate him a name as a conquerour,
Right through the fleight of her enchantèment.
Now hath Jaſon the Fleſe, and home is went
With Medea, and treſours full grete wonne:
But unwyſte of her fathir ſhe is gonne
To Theſſalye with Duke Jaſon her leſe,
That aftirwarde hath brought her to miſcheſe,
For as a traytour he is from her go,
And with her leftè yongè childrin two,
And falſely hath betrayid her, alas!
And er in love a cheſe traytour he was,
And weddid yet the thirdè wyſe anon,
That was the doughtir of the Kyng Creon.
This is the mede of lovyng and guerdon
That Medea receved of Duke Jaſon
Right for her truth and for her kyndineſſe,
That loved him bettir than her ſelf I geſſe,
And lefte her fathir and her herytage:
And of Jaſon this is the vaſſalage,
That in his dayes n'as nevir non yfounde
So falſe a lovir goyng on the grounde;
And therefore in her lettir thus ſhe ſayd,
Firſt whan ſhe of his falſneſſe him upbrayd,
Why lykid me thy yelowe here to ſe
More than the boundis of myn honeſte?
Why lykid me thy youth and thy fayrneſſe,
And of thy tonge the' infynite gracyouſneſſe?
O! haddeſt thou in thy conqueſt ded ybe
Ful mikil untrouth had ther dyed with the.
Wel can Ovide her lettre' in verſe endyte,
Which were as now to longé for to write.

HERE FOLOWETH

THE LEGENDE OF LUCRECE OF ROME.

Nowe mote I ſain th' exilvng of kyngis
Of Rome for ther horible doyngis,
Of the laſte kynge Sextus Tarquinius,
As ſaith Ovid and Titus Lyvius;
But for that cauſe tel I nat this ſtorye,
But for to prayſe and drawe in memorye
The ver. wyfe the very true Lucreſſe,
That for her wifehode and her ſtedfaſtneſſe
Nat onely that theſe Panymes her commende,
But that yclepid is in our Legende
The gret Auſtyn, that hath compaſſioun
Of this Lucrece that ſtarſe in Romè toun,
And in what wiſe I woll but ſhortly trete,
And of this thing I touch not but the grete.
Whan Ardea beſiegid was aboute
With Romayns that ful ſterne werin and ſtout,
Ful longe lay the ſiege, and litil wroughten,
So that they wer halfe ydil as 'hem thoughten,
And in his play Tarquinius the yonge
Gan for to jape, for he was lyght of tonge,
And ſayid that it was an ydle lyfe,
No man d d there no more than did his wife,
And let us ſpeke of wivis, that is beſt,
Praiſe evèrie man his own as him leſt,
And with our ſpechis let us eſe our herte.
A knight (yclepid Colatin) up ſterte,
And ſayid thus Nay, Sir, it is no nede
To trowin on the worde but on the dede;
I have a wife (quod he) that as I trowe
Is holdin gode of al that er her knowe,
Go we to Rome to nyght and we ſhul ſe.
Tarquinius anſwerde, That lykith me.
To Rome they be comin, and faſt 'hem dighte
To Colatyn'is houſe, and downe they light,
Tarquinius and eke this Colatine;
The huſbonde knewe the eſtirs wel and fyne,
And ful prively into the houſe thei gone:
Nor at the gate ne portir was there none,
And at the chambre dorè they abyde.
This noble wife ſate by her bedd'is ſyde
Diſcheveled, for no malyce ſhe ne thought,
And ſoft wol, ſaith Livy, that ſhe wrought
To kepin her from ſlouth and ydilneſſe,
And bad her ſervauntes done ther beſineſſe,
And aſkith 'hem, What tidinges herin ye?
How ſaieth men of the ſiege, howe ſhal it be?
God wolde the wallis were fallin adowne!
Myn huſbond is to long out of this towne,
For whiche drede doth me ſorely to ſmerte,
Right as a ſworde it ſtyngith to mine hert
Whan I thinkin on this or of that place;
God ſave my lorde, I pray him for his grace!
And therwithal ſo tendirly gan wepe,
And of her werke ſhe toke no more kepe,
But mekily ſhe let her eyin fal,
And thilkè ſemblant ſate her wel withal,
And eke her teris, ful of honeſtè
Embeliſſid her wifely chaſtitè;
Her countinaunce is to her hertè digne,
For thei accordidin in dede and ſigne.
And with that worde her huſbonde Colatin,
Or ſhe of him was ware, came ſtertling in,
And ſayid, Drede the nat for I am here:
And ſhe anone up roſe with bliſsful chere,
And kyſſed him, as of wivis is the wonne.
Tarquinius, this proudè king'is ſonne,
Concevid hath her beautie and her chere,
Her yelowe here, her bountie', and her manere,
Her hewe, her wordis, that ſhe hath complained,
And by no craft her beautie was nat fained,
And caught unto this lady ſoche deſire
That in his hert he brent as any fire,
So wodely, that his witte was all forgotten,
For wel thought he ſhe ſhuldè nat be goten;
And aye the more that he was in diſpaire
The more he covetith and thought her faire;
His blindè luſte was al his coveting.
On morowe, whan the birde began to ſyng,
Unto the ſiege he cometh ful privily,
And by himſelfe he walkith ſobirly,

The' ymage of her recording alway newe,
Thus lay her here, and thus freſh was her hew,
Thus ſate ſhe, thus ſhe ſpake, this was her chere,
Thus faire ſhe was, and this was her manere:
Al this conceite his herte hath newe ytake,
And as the ſe with tempeſt al to ſhake,
That aftir whan the ſtorme is al ago
Yet woll the watir quappe a daie or two,
Right ſo, though that her formè were abſent
The pleſaunce of her formè was preſent;
But natheleſſe nat pleſaunce but delite,
Or an unrightful talent with diſpite,
For maugre her ſhe ſhal my lemman be,
Hap helpith hardy man alway, (quod he;)
What endè that I make it ſhal be ſo,
And gyrte him with his ſworde and gan to go:
And he forth ritt til he to Rome is come,
And al alone his way that he hath nome
Unto the houſe of Colatin ful right;
Down was the ſunne, and day hath loſt his lyght;
And in he come unto a pritie halke,
And in the night ful thefely gan he ſtalke,
Whan every wight was to his reſt ybrought,
Ne no wight had of treſon ſoche a thought,
Whethir by windowe or by othir gin:
With ſwerde ydrawe ſhortly he comith in
There as ſhe lay, this noble wife Lucrece,
And as ſhe woke her bedde ſhe feltin preſſe:
What beſt is that (quod ſhe) that wayith thus?
I am the king'is ſonne Tarquinius,
(Quod he) but and thou crie or noiſe ymake,
Or if thou any creäture awake,
By thilkè God that formid man of lyve
This ſwerdè through thyne hertè ſhal I ryve;
And therwithal unto her throte he ſterte,
And ſet the ſwerde al ſharpe upon her herte.
No word ſhe ſpake; ſhe hath no might therto;
What ſhal ſhe ſaine? her witte is al ago,
As when a wolfe ſindith a lambe alone;
To whom ſhal ſhe complaine or make her mone?
What! ſhal ſhe fightin with an hardie knight?
Wel wotte men that a woman hath no might;
What ſhal ſhe crie, or how ſhal ſhe aſterte,
That hath her by the throte with ſwerde at herte?
She aſkith grace, and ſaid al that ſhe can.
No, wolt thou nat tho? (quod this cruil man)
As wiſely Jupiter my ſoulè ſave
As I ſhal in thy ſtable ſle thy knave,
And lay him in thy bedde, and loudè crie
That I the fyndin in ſoche avoutrie;
And thus thou ſhalt be ded, and alſo leſe
Thy name, for that thou ſhalt none othir cheſe.
This Romains wives lovidin ſo ther name
At thilke tyme, and dredidin ſo the ſhame,
That what for fere of ſlaundre' and dred of deth
She loſt at onis both her wit and breth,
And in a ſwough ſhe lay, and woxe ſo ded
Men mightin ſmitin of her arme or hed,
She felith nothing neithir foule ne feyre.
Tarquinius, that art a king'is heyre,
And ſhuldiſt as by linage and by right
Done as a lorde and as a very knight,
Why haſt thou done diſpite to chivalrye?
Why haſt thou done thy lady vilanie?
Alas! of the this was a vila'inous dede.
But nowe to the' purpoſe. In the ſtory' I rede
Whan he was gonne, and this miſchaunce is fal,
This lady ſent aftir her frendis al,
Fathir, mothir, and huſbonde, al yfere,
And diſchevilid with her herè clere,
In habyt ſoche as women uſid tho
Unto the buryeng of ther frendis go,
She ſate in hal with a ſorowful ſyght:
Her frendis aſkin what her aylin myght,
And who was ded? and ſhe ſate aye wepyng,
A worde for ſhame ne may ſhe forth out bring,
Ne upon them ſhe durſtè nat behold;
But at the laſte of Tarquin ſhe 'hem tolde
This ruful caſe, and al this thyng horible:
The wo to tellin were impoſſible
That ſhe and all her frendis make at ones;
Al haddin folkis hertis ben of ſtones
It might have makid 'hem upon her rewe,
Her hert ywas ſo wiſely and ſo trewe.
She ſaid that for her gilte ne for her blame
Her huſbonde ſhulde nat have the foulè name;
That woldè ſhe nat ſuffrin by no waye.
And they anſwerid al unto her faye
That they foryave it her, for it was right,
It was no gylte, it lay nat in her myght,
And ſaydin her enſamplis many one:
But al for naught, for thus ſhe ſaid anone,
Be as be may (quod ſhe) of forgivyng,
I will nat have no forgiſte for nothing:
But privily ſhe coughtin forth a knife,
And therwithal ſhe raſte her ſelfe her life,
And as ſhe fel adowne ſhe caſt her loke,
And of her clothis yet gode hede ſhe toke,
For in her fallyng yet ſhe had a care
Leſte that her fete or ſoche thingis lay bare,
So wel ſhe lovid clenneſſe and eke trouthe.
Of her had all the towne of Romè routhe,
And Brutus hath by her chaſte blode yſwore
That Tarquin ſhulde ybaniſhed be therfore
And al his kinne, and let the peple cal,
And opinly the tale he tolde 'hem al,
And opinly let cary' her on a bere
Through al the towne, that men may ſe and here
The' horible dede of her oppreſſioun;
Ne nevir was there kyng in Romè toun
Sens thylkè day: and ſhe was holdin there
A ſaynt, and evre' her day yhalowed dere
As in ther lawe. And thus endith Lucreſſe
The noble wyfe, Titus berith witneſſe.
I tel it for ſhe was of love ſo trewe,
Ne in her wil ſhe chaungid for no newe,
And in her ſtable hertè ſadde and kinde,
That in theſe women men may al day finde
There as they caſt ther hert there it dwellith;
For wel I wote that Chriſt himſelfe tellith
That in Iſrael, as wide as is the londe,
He ſo grete faith in al the londe ne fonde
As in a woman, and this is no lie:
And as for men, loke ye ſoche tyrannie
Thei done al daie, aſſay 'hem who ſo liſte,
The trewiſt is ful brotil for to triſte.

HERE FOLOWETH

THE LEGENDE OF ARIADNE,

OF ATHENS.

MINOS, Infernal Judge, of Crete the Kyng,
Now cometh thy lotte; thou comiſt on the ryng:
Nat for thy ſake alone writen is this ſtorye,
But for to clepe ayen unto memorie
Of Theſeus the gret untrouthe of love,
For whiche the goddis of hevin above
Ben wroth, and wrath have takin for thy ſynne;
Be red for ſhame, nowe I thy lyfe beginne.

Minos, that was the mighty King of Crete,
That had an hundrid cities ſtrong and grete,
To ſchole hath ſent his ſonne Androgeus
To Athenes, of the whiche it happid thus,
That he was ſlayne, lerning philoſophie
Right in that cyte, nat but for envie.

The grete Minos, of the whiche that I ſpeke,
His ſonnis deth is comin for to wreke.
Alcathoe' he beſiegid harde and longe,
But natheles the wallis be ſo ſtronge,
And Niſus that was kyng of that cite
So chivalrous, that litil dredith he;
Of Minos or his hoſte toke he ſo cure
Tyl on a daie befil an avinture
That Niſus doughtir ſtode upon the wal,
And of the ſiege behelde the manir al;
So happid it that at a ſcarmiſhing
She caſte her hert upon Minos the king,
For his beautie and for his chivalrye,
So ſorely that ſhe wenid for to die;
And ſhortly of this proceſſe for to pace,
She made Minos to winnin thilkè place,
So that the cite was al at his wyl
To ſavin whom him liſte or ellis ſpill;
But wickidly he quit her kyndèneſſe,
And let her drenche in ſorowe and diſtreſſe,
N'ere that the goddis had of her pite:
But that tale were to longe as nowe for me.

Athenis was this King Minos alſo,
As Alcathoe' and othir townis mo,
And this th' effect, that Minos hath ſo driven
Them of Athenis that thei mote him yeven
Fro yere to yere ther ownè childrin dere
For to be ſlaine, as ye ſhal aftir here.
This Minos hath a monſtre', a wickid beſt,
That was ſo cruil, that without areſt
Whan that a man was brought into' his preſens
He wolde him ete; there helpith no defence:
And every thirde yere withoutin doute
Thei caſtidin lotte as it came aboute
On riche and pore, he muſt his ſonnè take,
And of his childe he muſt a preſente make
To Minos, for to ſave him or to ſpill,
Or let his beſt devour him at his will:
And this hath Minos don right in diſpite;
To wreke his ſonne was ſet al his delyte,
And makin 'hem of Athenis hys thral,
Fro yere to yere while that he livin ſhal;
And hom he ſailith whan this toun is won.
This wickid cuſtome is ſo long yron
Till that the King of Athenes, Ægæus,
Mote ſendin his owne ſonnè Theſeus,
Sens that the lotte is fallin him upon,
To ben devourid, for grace is there non:
And forth is ladde this woful yongè knight
Unto the countre' of Minos ful of night,
And in a priſon fettrid faſt is he
Tyl that ilke time he ſhulde yfretin be.

Wel maiſt thou wepe, o woful Theſeus!
That art a king'is ſonne and dampid thus;
Me thinkith this, that thou art depe yholde
To whom that ſavid the fro caris colde,
And nowe yf any woman helpè the
Wel oughtiſt thou her ſervaunt for to be,

And ben her trewe lovir yere by yere.
But nowe to come aien to my matere.
The tourè there this Theſeus is throwe
Downe in the bottom derke and wondir lowe,
Was joyning to the wal of a foreine
That longing was unto the doughtrin tweine
Of Minos, whiche that in ther chambris grete
Dweltin above toward the maiſtirſtrete
Of thilkè towne in joy and in ſolas:
N'ot I nat howe, it happened per eas,
As Theſeus complainid him by night,
The kinge's doughtir that Ariadne hight,
And eke her ſuſtir Phœdra, herdin al
His complainte as thei ſtodin on the wall
And lokid up upon the brightè mone,
'Hem liſtin nat to go to bedde ſo ſone,
And of his wo thei had compaſſion;
A king'is ſonne to be in ſoche priſon,
And ben devoured, thought 'hem grete pite:
Than Ariadne ſpake to' her ſuſtir fre,
And ſayd, Phœdra, my leſe ſuſtir dere!
This woful lord'is ſonne maie ye nat here
Howe pitouſly he complainith his kinne,
And eke his pore eſtate that he is inne,
And giltileſſe? certis nowe it is routhe,
And if ye wol aſſentin, by my trouthe
He ſhal ben holpin, howe ſo that we do.
Phœdra anſwerde, Ywis me is as wo
For him as er I was for any man,
And to his helpe the beſt rede that I can
Is, that we done the gailir privily
To come and ſpekin with us haſtily,
And done this woful man with him to come,
For if he maie this monſtir ovircome
Than were he quite, there is non other bote:
Let us wel taſte him at hi- hert'is rote,
That if ſo be that he a wepon have,
Where that he dare, his life to kepe and ſave,
Fightin with this fende, and himſelf defende,
For in the priſon there he ſhal diſcende:
Ye wote wel that the beſt is in a place
That is not derke, and hath roume and eke ſpace
To welde an axe, or ſwerde, a ſtaffe, or knife,
So that me thinkith he ſhuldè ſave his life;
If that he be a man he ſhal do ſo:
And we ſhal make him ballis eke alſo
Of wexe and towe, that whan he gapith faſt
Into the beſt'is throte he ſhal 'hem caſte
To ſleke his hongir and encombre his tethe,
And right anon whan that Theſeus ſethe
The beſt achekid he ſhal on him kepe
To ſleen him or they comin more to hepe;
This wepon ſhal the gailir or that tyde
Ful privily within the priſon hyde:
And for the houſe is crenclid to and fro,
And hath ſo queintè wayis for to go,
For it is ſhapin as the maſe is wrought,
Therto have I a remedy' in my thought,
That by a clewe of twyne as he hath gon
The ſamè way he may returne anon,
Folo'wing alway the threde as he hath come:
And whan that he this beſt hath ovircome
Than may he flien away out of this ſtedè,
And eke the gailir may he with him ledè,
And him avaunce at home in his countre,
Sens that ſo gret a lord'is ſonne is he.
This is my rede, if that ye dare it take.
What ſhulde I lengir ſermon of it make?
The gailir cometh, and with him Theſeus;
And whan theſe thingis ben accordid thus,
Adowne ſate Theſeus upon his kne;
O the right lady of my life! (quod he)
I ſorowfull man, ydamnid to the dethe,
Fro you whi'is that me ylaſtith brethe
I wol nat twinne aftir this avinture,
But in your ſervicè thus I wol endure,
That as a wretch unknow I wol you ſerve
For evirmore tyl that min hertè ſterve;
Forſake I wol at home min heritage,
And as I ſaied ben of your courte a page,
If that ye vouchſafin that in this place
Ye grauntin me to havin ſoche a grace
That I may have nat but my mete and drinke;
And for my ſuſtinaunce yet wol I ſwinke
Right as you liſt, that Minos ne no wight
Sens that he ſaw me nevir with eyenſight,
Ne no man ellis, ſhal me nat eſpye,
So ſlily and ſo wel I ſhal me gye,
And me ſo wel disfigurè and ſo lowe,
That in this world there ſhal no man me knowe,
To have my lyfe and to have the preſence
Of you that done to me this excellence;
And to my fathir ſhal I ſendin here
This worthy man, which that is your gaylere,
And him ſo guerdon that he ſhal wel be
One of the gretiſt men of my countre:
And if I durſtè ſayne, my lady bright!
I am a king'is ſonne and eke a knight,
As woldè God if that it mighte ybe
Ye werin in my countre allè thre,
And I with you to bere you companye,
Than ſhuld you ſene if that I therof lye,
And if I profir you in lowe manere
To ben your page, and ſervin you right here,
But I you ſerve as lowly in that place
Ypray to Mars to yeve me ſochè grace
That ſham'is deth on me there motè fall,
And deth and poverte to my frendis all,
And that my ſpritè by night motè go
Aftir my deth and walkin to and fro,
That I mote of foule traitour have a name,
For whiche my ſprit mote go, to do me ſhame,
And if I clayme evir othir degre,
But ye vouchſafin to grauntin it me,
As I have ſaid, of ſham'is deth I dey,
And mercy, lady! I can naught els ſey.
A ſemely knight was this Theſeus to ſe,
And yongè, but of twenty yere and thre,
But who ſo had yſene his countinaunce
He would have wept for routh of his penaunce,
For which this Ariadne' in this manere
Anſwerde to his profre and to his chere:
A kyng'is ſonne and eke a knight (quod ſhe)
To ben my ſervaunt in ſo low degre
God ſhuld it! for the ſhame of women al,
And lene me nevir ſoche a caſe befal,
And ſende you grace and ſleight of hert alſo
You to defende and knightly ſleen your foe,

And lene here aftir that I may you finde
To me and to my ſuſtir here ſo kynde
That I ne repent nat to yeve you lyſe;
Yet were it bettir that I were your wife,
Sithe that ye ben as gentil borne as I,
And have a relme nat ferre but faſte by,
Than I ſuffrid your gentilleſſe to ſterve,
Or that I let you as a page to ſerve;
It is no profite unto your kinrede,
But what is that that men nill do for dred?
And to my ſuſtir, ſyth that it is ſo
That ſhe mote gone with me if that I go,
Or ellis ſuffre deth as wel as I,
That ye unto your ſonne as trewily
Done her be weddid at your home comming;
This is the fynal ende of al this thing,
Ye ſwere it here on all that may be ſworne.
Ye, lady myn, (quod he) or els to torne
More I be with the Minotaure to morowe,
And havith here of min hert blod to borowe,
If that ye wol, if I had knife or ſpere
I wolde it lettin out and thereon ſwere,
For than at erſte I wot ye would me leve,
By Mars, that is the chiefe of my beleve,
So that I mightin lyvin and nat faile
To morowe for to takin my bataile
I ne wolde nevir fro this place flye
Tyl that ye ſhulde the very profe yſe;
For now, if that the ſoth I ſhall you ſay,
I have lovid you ful many a daie,
Though ye ne wiſt it nat, in my countre,
And aldirmoſte deſyrid you to ſe
Of any earthly living creature;
Upon my trouthe I ſwere and you aſſure,
This ſevin yere I have your ſervaunt be;
Nowe have I you, and alſo have ye me,
My dere hert: of Athenis Ducheſſe.
This lady ſmilith at his ſtedfaſtneſſe,
And at his hertely wordes, and at his chere,
And to her ſuſtir ſayd in this manere:
And ſothely, leve all ſuſtir myn, (quod ſhe)
Nowe be we ducheſſis both I and ye,
And ſikerde to the regals of Athenes,
And bothe hercaſtir likely to be quenes,
And favid fro his deth a king'is ſonne,
As er of gentilwomen is the wonne
To ſave a gentilman enforth ther might,
In honeſt cauſe, and namely in his right,
Me thinkith no wight ought us hereof blame,
Ne berin us therfore an evil name.
And ſhortly of this matir for to make,
This Theſeus of her hath leve ytake,
And every point was performed in dede
As ye have in this covenaunt herde me rede;
His weppen, his clewe, his thing, that I have ſaid,
Was by the gailir in the houſe ylaid,
There as the Mynotaure hath his dwellyng,
Right faſte by the dore at his entring,
And Theſeus is lad unto his dethe;
And forth unto this Minotaure he gethe,
And by the techyng of this Adriane
He ovircame this beſt and was his bane;
And out he comith by the clewe againe
Ful privily whan he this beſt hath ſlaine,
And by the gailir gottin hath a barge,
And of his wiv'is treſure gan it charge,
And toke his wife and eke her ſuſtir fre,
And eke the gailir, and with 'hem al thre
Is ſtole away out of the londe by night,
And to the countre' of Enupie him dight,
Thereas he had a frende of his knowing;
There feſtin thei, there dauncin thei and ſing,
And in his armis hath this Adriane,
That of the beſt hath kept him fro his bane,
And get him there a noble barge anone,
And of his countre folke a ful gret wone,
And taketh his leve, and homwarde ſailith he;
And in an yle amiddis the wilde ſe,
Thereas there dwellid nevir creture none
Save wild beſtis, and that ful many one,
He made his ſhippe alonde for to ſette,
And in that yle halfe a daie he lette,
And ſayd, that on the londe he muſt him reſte;
His mariners have donè right as him leſte:
And for to tellin ſhortly in this caſe,
Whan Ariadne his wife aſlepe was,
For that her ſuſtir fayrir was than ſhe,
He taketh her in his honde, and forth goth he
To ſhyppe, and as a traitour ſtale away
While that this Ariadne aſlepe lay,
And to his countre warde he ſailith blive,
A twenty dyvil way the winde him drive,
And found his fathir drenchid in the ſe.
Me lyſte no more to ſpeke of him parde;
Theſe falſè lovirs poiſon be ther bane!
But I wol turne againe to Adriane,
That is with ſlepe for werineſſe ytoke,
Ful ſorowfully her hert may awake.
Alas! for the myne herte hath grete pite.
Right in the dawning awakith ſhe,
And gropith in the bed, and fond right nought.
Alas, (quod ſhe) that evir I was wrought!
I am betrayid, and her here to rente,
And to the ſtronde all barefote faſt ſhe wente,
And cryid, Theſeus, myn hertè ſwete!
Where be ye, that I may nat with you mete,
And might thus with the beſtis ben yſlaine?
The halowe rockis anſwerde her againe;
No man ſhe ſawe, and yet yſhone the mone;
And hye upon a rocke ſhe wentin ſone,
And ſawè his barge yſailing in the ſe;
Colde woxe her hert, and right thus ſayid ſhe:
Mekir than ye finde I the beſtis wylde.
Hath he nat ſynne that he her thus begylde?
She cried, O turne againe for routhe and ſinne!
Thy barge ne hath nat al his meinè inne.
Her couvercheſe on a pole ſtyked ſhe
Aſcauncè that he ſhulde it wele yſe,
And him remembre that ſhe was behinde,
And turne againe, and on the ſtronde her finde.
But all for naught; his way he is ygone;
And downe ſhe fel a ſwowne upon a ſtone,
And up ſhe riſte, and kiſſed in all her care
The ſteppis of his fete there hè hath fare,
And to her bed right thus ſhe ſpekith tho:
Thou bed, (quod ſhe) that haſt receivid two,
Thou ſhalt anſwere of two and not of one;
Where is the greter perte away gone?

Alas! wher ſhal I wretched wight become?
For though ſo be that bote none here come
Home to my countrè dare I nat for drede;
I can my ſelfin in this caſe nat rede.
What ſhould I tellin more here complaining?
It is ſo long it were an hevy thing;
In her epiſtle Naſo tellith all.
But ſhortly to the ende tellin I ſhall,
The goddis have her holpin for pyte,
And in the ſygne of Taurus men may ſe
The ſtonis of her corowne ſhynè clere.
I will no more ſpekin of this matere,
But thus this falſe lovir can begile
His trew love; the devil quit him his while!

HERE FOLOWETH

THE LEGENDE OF PHILOMELA.

Thou yevir of the formis that haſt wrought
The fayrè world, and bare it in thy thought
Eternally er thou thy werke began,
Why madiſt thou to the ſlaundir of man?
Or allbe that it was not thy doyng,
As for that ende ſo making ſoche a thing,
Why ſuffredeſt thou that Tereus was bore,
That is in love ſo falſe and ſo forſwore,
That fro this world up to the firſt hevin
Corrumpith whan that ſolke his name nevin?
And as to me, ſo grifly was his dede,
That whan that I this ſoulè ſtorie rede
Myne eyin wexin foule and ſore alſo,
Yet laſteth the venyme of ſo long ago
That it enfectith him that wolde beholde
The ſtorie of Tereus of which I tolde.
Of Thrace was he the lorde, and kyn to Marte,
The cruil god that ſtante with blody darte;
And weddid had he with full blifsful chere
King Pandion'is fairè doughtir dere
That hight Progne, the floure of her countre,
Though Juno liſte not at the feſt to be
Ne Hymen, that the god of Weddyng is,
But at the feſtè redy ben iwis
The Furis three, with all ther mortall bronde.
The oule all night above the balkis wonde,
That prophete is of wo and of miſchaunce.
This revill, full of ſong and full of daunce,
Laſted a fourtènight or little laſſe:
But ſhortlie of this ſtorie for to paſſe,
(For I am werie of hym for to tell)
Five yere his wife and he togithir dwell,
Till on a daie ſhe gan ſo ſore to long
To ſene her ſuſtir, that ſhe ſawe not long,
That for deſire ſhe ne wiſt what to ſaie,
But to her huſbonde gan ſhe for to praie,
For Godd'is love, that ſhe mote onis gone
To ſene her ſuſtre', and come ayen anon,
Or ellis but ſhe motè to her wende
She praied him that he would aftir her ſende;
And this was daie by daie all her praiere,
With all humbleſſe of wifehode, worde, and chere.
This Tereus let make his ſhippis yare,
And into Grece hymſelf is forthe iſare:
Unto his fathir in lawe gan he praie
To vouchefafin that for a moneth or twaie
That Philomela his wive's ſuſtir might
On Progne' his wife but onis have a ſight,
And ſhe ſhall come to you again anon,
My ſelf with her I will bothe come and gon,
And as my hert's life I will her kepe.
This olde Pandion, this kyng, gan to wepe
For tendirneſſe of hertè for to leve
His doughtir gon, and for to yeve her leve;
Of all this worlde he lovid nothyng ſo;
But at the laſtè leve hath ſhe to go,
For Philomela with ſalt teris eke
Gan of her fathir his grace to beſeke
To ſene her ſuſtir, that her longith ſo,
And hym enbracith with her armis two:
And therewithal ſo yonge and faire was ſhe,
That when that Tereus ſawe her beaute,
And of arraie that there was none her liche,
And yet of beaute was ſhe to ſo riche,
He caſt his fierie herte upon her ſo
That he woll have her how ſo that it go,
And with his wilis knelid and ſo praied
Till at the laſt Pandion thus yſaied:
Now ſonne, (quod he) that art to me ſo dere,
I the betake my yonge doughtir here,
That bereth the keie of all myne hert'is life,
And grete me well my doughtir and thy wife,

And yeve her levè ſomtyme for to pleie,
That ſhe maie ſe me onis or I deie.
And ſothly he hath made hym richè feſt,
And to his folke the moſte and eke the leſt
That with him came, and yave him yeftis grete,
And him conveyith through the maſtirſtrete
Of Athenis and to the ſe hym brought,
And toûrnith home, no malice he ne thought.
The oris pullith forth the veſſil faſt,
And into Thrace arrivith at the laſt,
And up into a foreſt he her led,
And to a cave full privily hym ſped,
And in this darkè cave, if that her leſt
Or ne liſt nought, he bad her for to reſt,
Of whiche her herte agroſe, and ſayid thus:
Where is my ſuſtir, brothir Tereus?
And there withall ſhe wept full tendirlie,
And quoke for fere all pale and pituouſlie,
Right as the lambe that of the wolfe is bitten,
Or as the culver that of the' egle is ſmitten,
And is out of his clawis forthe eſcaped,
Yet it is ſtill aferde and ſore awhaped,
Leſt it be hent eftſonis; ſo ſate ſhe:
But uttirlie it maie none othir be,
By force hath this traitour ydoen a dede
That he hath reſt her of her maidinhede
Maugre her hed, by ſtrength and by his might.
Lo, here a dede of men, and that aright!
She cryith Suſtir with full loudè ſteven,
And Fathir dere! o helpe me God in heven!
All helpith not: and yet this falſè theſe
Hath doen his lady yet a more miſcheſe,
For fere leſt that ſhe ſhould his ſhamè crie,
And doen him opinlie a vilanie,
And with his ſwerd her tong of kerfith he,
And in a caſtill made her for to be
Full privily in priſone evirmore,
And kept her to his uſage and his ſtore,
So that ſhe ne might nevir more aſterte.
O ſely Philomela! wo' is thine herte,
Huge ben thy ſorowis, and wondir ſmerte;
God wrekè the, and ſendè the thy bone!
Now it is time I make an endè ſone.
This Tereus is to his wife icome,
And in his armis hath his wife inome,
And pitouſly he wept, and ſhoke his hedde,
And ſwore her that he found her ſuſtir dedde,
For whiche this ſelie Progne hath ſoche wo
That nigh her ſorowfull herte brake atwo:
And thus in teris let I Progne dwell,
And of her ſuſtir forthe I woll you tel.
This woſull ladie lernid had in youth
So that ſhe workin and enbraudin couth,
And wevin in her ſtole the radèvore,
As it of women hath ben wovid yore;
And, ſothly for to ſaine, ſhe hath her fill
Of mete and drinke, of clothing at her will,
And couth eke rede well inough and endite,
But with a pennè ſhe ne could not write,
But lettirs can ſhe wevin to and fro,
So that by that the yere was all ago
She had ywovin in a ſtamen large
How ſhe was brought fro Athens in a barge,
And in a cave how that ſhe was ybrought,
And all the thyng that Tereus ywrought
She wave it wel, and wrote the ſtorie' above
How ſhe was ſervid for her ſuſtir's love;
And to a knave a ring ſhe yave anon,
And prayid him by ſignis for to gon
Unto the Quene, and berin her that clothe,
And by ſignis ſwore him many an othe
She ſhould him yevin what ſhe gettin might.
This knave anon unto the Quene him dight,
And toke it her, and all the manir tolde:
And when that Progne hath this thing behold
No worde ſhe ſpake for ſorowe and for rage,
But fainid her to gon on pilgrimage
To Bacchus temple'; and in a little ſtounde
Her dombe ſuſtir yſittyng hath ſhe founde,
Weping in the caſtill her ſelf alone;
Alas the wo, the conſtraint, and the mone,
That Progne upon her dombe ſuſtir maketh!
In armis everiche of 'hem othir taketh:
And thus I let 'hem in ther ſorowe dwell,
The remènaunt is no charge for to tell,
For this is all and ſome, thus was ſhe ſerved
That nevir ought agiltid ne deſerved
Unto this cruill man that ſhe of wiſte.
Ye maie beware of men if that you liſte,
For all be that he woll not for his ſhame
Doin as Tereus to leſe his name,
Ne ſerve you as a murtherer or a knave,
Full little while ſhullin ye trewe him have,
That woll I ſain, al wer he now my brother,
But it ſo be that he maie have none other.

HERE FOLOWETH

THE LEGENDE OF PHYLLIS.

By prove as well as by authorite
That wickid fruicte commeth of a wicked tre
That maie ye find if that it likith you;
But for this ende I speke this as now,
To tellin you of falfe Demophoon;
In love a falfir herd I nevir non
But it werin his fathir Theſeus;
God for his grace fro foche one kepin us!
Thus theſe women yprayin that it here;
Now the' effecte tourne I of my matere.
Deſtroyid is of Troiè the cite;
This Demophon came failyng in the ſe
Toward Athenis, to his paleis large;
With him came many a ſhip and many' a barge
All full of folke, of whiche full many one
Is wounded ſore, and ſike, and wo begone,
And thei have at the ſiegè long ilaine;
Behind him came a winde and eke a raine
That ſhoſe ſo ſore his faile ne might not ſtonde,
Hym were levir then all the worlde a londe;
So huntith hym the tempeſt to and fro,
So dark it was he could no where ago,
And with a wave to bruſtin was his ſtere;
His ſhip was rent ſo lowe in ſoche manere
That carpenter ne coulde it not amende;
The ſe by night as any torche brende
For wodè, and poſſith him up and doun,
Till Neptune hath of hym compaſſioun,
And Thetis, Chorus, Triton, and thei all,
And madin him opon a londe to fall
Whereof that Phyllis lady was and quene,
Lycurgus doughtir, fairir unto ſene
Then is the floure again the brightè ſonne:
Unneth is Demphon to londe iwonne,
Weke and eke werie, and his folke forpined
Of werineſſe, and alſo enſamined,
And to the deth he was almoſte idriven:
His wiſè folke counſaile have him yeven
To ſekin helpe and ſuccour of the Quene,
And lokin what his gracè mightin bene,
And makin in that lande ſome cheveſaunce,
And kepin him fro wo and fro miſchaunce,
For ſike he was and almoſte at the deth,
Unnethis might he ſpeke or drawin breth,
And lieth in Rhodopeia hym to reſte.
When he may walkin him thought it was beſte
Unto the courte to ſekin for ſuccour;
Men knewe him wele, and diddin hym honour,
For at Athenis duke and lorde was he,
As Theſeus his fathir hath ibe,
That in his tyme was of grete renoun,
No man ſo grete in all his regioun,
And like his fathre' of face and ſtature,
And falſe of love, it came hym of nature,
As doeth the foxe Renarde, the fox'is ſonne,
Of kinde he could his oldè fathir wonne
Withoutin lore, as can a drakè ſwimme
When it is caught and caried to the brimme.
This honourable Phyllis doth him chere;
Her likith well his porte and his manere;
But I am all agrotid here beforne
To write of 'hem that in love ben forſworne,
And eke to haſtin me in my Legende,
Whiche to performè God me grace yſende,
Therefore I paſſin ſhortly in this wiſe.
Ye have well herd of Theſeus the giſe
In the betraying of faire Adriane,
That of her pite kept him fro his bane;
At ſhort wordis, right ſo Demophoon
The famè waie and the ſame pathe hath gon
That did his falſè fathir Theſeus,
For unto Phyllis hath he ſwornè thus,
To weddin her, and her his trouth yplight,
And pikid of her all the gode he might,
Whan he was whole and ſounde, and had his reſte,
And doeth with Phillis what ſo that him leſt,

As well I could, if that me liſtè ſo,
Tellin of all his doying to and fro.
He ſaled that to his countre mote hym faile,
For there he would her weddyng apparaile
As fill to her honour and his alſo:
And opinly he toke his levè tho,
And to her ſwore that he would not ſojourne,
But in a moneth again he would retourne,
And in that londe let make his ordinaunce
As very lorde, and toke the obeiſaunce
Well and humbly, and his ſhippis ydight,
And home he goith the next waie he might,
But unto Phyllis again came he nought,
And that hath ſhe ſo harde and ſore ibought,
Alas! as the ſtorie doeth us recorde,
That ſhe was her owne deth right with a corde,
When that ſhe ſaw that Demophon her traied;
But firſt wrote ſhe to him, and faſt him praid
He would come and delivir her of pain,
As I reherſin ſhall a worde or twain;
Me liſte not to vouchſafe on him to ſwinke,
Diſpendin ou him a penne full of ynke,
For falſe in love was he, right as his fire,
The devil ſet ther ſoulis both on fire!
But of the lettre' of Phyllis woll I write
A worde or twain, although it be but lite.
Thine hoſteſſe, (quod ſhe) o Demophoon!
Thy Phyllis, which that is ſo wo begon,
Of Rhodopeie upon you mote complain,
Ovir the terme yſet betwixt us twain
That ye ne holdin forwarde as ye ſaied;
Your ancre, whiche ye in our havin laied,
Hight us that ye would comin out of doubt
Or that the mone onis went about,
But timis fower the mone hath hid her face
Sens thilkè daie ye wentin fro this place.
And fowir timis light the worlde again;
But for all that yet ſhall I ſothly ſain
Yet hath the ſtreme of Scython not ybrought
From Athenis the ſhip, yet came it nought;
And if that ye the termè rekin would
As I or othir true lovirs doe ſhould,
I plainin not (God wot) before my daie.
But all her lettir writin I ne maie
By ordir, for it were to me a charge;
Her lettir was right long, and thereto large,
But here and there in rhime I have it laied
There as me thought that ſhe hath wel yſaied.
She ſaied, The ſailis comith not again,
Ne to the worde there n'is no fey certain;
But I wot why ye comin not, (quod ſhe)
For I was of my love to you ſo fre;
And of the goddis that ye have yſwore
If that ther vengeaunce fall on you therefore
Ye be not ſuffiſaunt to bere the pain;
To mochil truſtid I, well maie I ſain,
Upon your linage and your fairè tong,
And on your teris faſly out ywrong:
How coud ye wepin ſo by craft? (quod ſhe)
Maie there ſoch teris evir fainid be?
Now certis, if ye would have in memorie
It oughtin be to you but little glorie
To have a ſelie maidin thus betraied:
To God (quod ſhe) praie I, and oft have praied,
That it be now the gretiſt price of all
And moſte honour that er you ſhall befall;
And when thine old auncetirs paintid be,
In whiche men maie ther worthineſſe yſe,
Then praie I God thou paintid be alſo,
That folke maie redin fortheby as thei go,
Lo! this is he that with his flattiry
Betrayid hath and doen her villany
That was his trué love in thought and dede!
But ſothly of o poinct yet maie thei rede,
That ye ben like your fathir as in this,
For he begilid Ariadne' iwis
With ſuche an arte and ſoche a ſubtilte
As thou thy ſelvin haſt beguilid me;
As in that poinct, although it be not feire,
Thou folowiſt certain, and art his heire:
But ſens thus ſinfully ye me begile
My bodis mote ye ſene within a while
Right in the haven of Athenis fletyng
Withoutin ſepulture and burying,
Though ye ben hardir then is any ſtone.
And when this lettir was forth ſent anone,
And knewe how brotill and how fals he was,
She for diſpaire forbid her ſelf, alas!
Suche ſorowe' hath ſhe for ſhe beſet her ſo.
Beware ye women of your ſubtill ſo,
Sens yet this daie men maie enſample ſe,
And truſtith now in love no man but me.

HERE FOLOWETH

THE LEGENDE OF HYPERMNESTRA.

In Grece whilom were dwelling brethrene two,
Of whiche that one was callid Danao,
That many' a ſonne hath of his bodie wonne,
As ſoche falſe loviris oftimis conne.
Emongis his ſonnis all there was one
That aldirmoſte he loved of everychone,
And when this child was borne this Danao
Shope him a name, and callid hym Lino;
That othir brothir callid was Egiſte,
That was of love as falſe as er him liſte;
And many' a daughtir gate he in his life,
Of whiche he gate upon his rightè wife
A doughtir dere, and did her for to call
Hypermneſtra, the youngiſt of 'hem all,
The whichè childe of her nativite
To alle gode thewis yborne was ſhe,
As likid to the goddes or ſhe was borne
That of the ſhefe ſhe ſhould be the corne:
The werdis that we clepin Deſtine
Hath ſhapin her that ſhe muſt nedis be
Pitous, and ſad, and wiſe, and true as ſtele;
And to this woman it accordith wele,
For though that Venus yave her grete beute
With Jupiter compownid ſo was ſhe
That conſcience and trouthe, and drede of ſhame,
And of her wifehode for to kepe her name,
This thought her was felicite as here:
And Red Mars was at that tyme of the yere
So feble that his malice is him raſte,
Repreſſid hath Venus his cruill craſte,
And what with Venus and othir oppreſſion
Of houſis Mars his venime is adon,
That Hypermneſtra dare not handle' a knife
In malice, though ſhe ſhouldin leſe her life;
But nathèleſſe as hevin gan tho turne,
Two bad aſpectis hath ſhe of Saturne,
That made her for to dyin in priſon;
And I ſhall aſtir makin mencion
Of Danao and Egiſtis alſo,
And though ſo be that thei were brethrin two,
For thilke tyme n'as ſparid no linage,
It likid 'hem to makin mariage
Betwixt Hypermneſtra and him Lino,
And caſtin in ſoche a daie it ſhall be ſo,
And full accordid was it uttirly,
The' araie is wrought, the tyme is faſtè by;
And thus Lino hath of his fathir's brother
The doughtir wedded, and ech of 'hem hath other.
The torchis brennin and the lampis bright,
The ſacrificis ben full redy dight,
Th' enſence out of the fire out rekith ſote,
The floure the leſe, is rent up by the rote
To makin garlandis and crounis hie;
Full is the place of ſound of minſtralcie,
Of ſongis amourous of mariage,
As thilkè tymè was the plain uſage;
And this was in the paleis of Egiſte,
That in his hous was lord right as him liſte;
And thus that daie thei drivin to an ende,
The frendis takin leve, and home thei wend:
The night is come, the bride ſhall go to bed,
Egiſtis to his chamber faſt him ſped,
And privily he let his doughtir call
When that the hous voidid was of 'hem all;
He lokith on his doughtir with glade chere,
And to her ſpake as ye ſhall aftir here:
My right doughtir, the treſour of mine herte!
Sens firſt that daie that ſhapin was my ſherte,
Or by the Fatall Suſtir had my dome,
So nye myne hertè nevir thing ne come,
As thou my Hypermneſtra, doughtir dere!
Take hede what thy fathir ſayith the here,
And werke aftir thy wiſir evirmo,
For aldirfirſt doughtir I love the ſo
That all the worlde to me n'is halfe ſo leſe,
Ne I n'olde redè the to thy miſcheſe

For all the gode undir the coldè mone;
And what I mene it ſhal be ſaid right ſone,
With proteſtacion, as ſaine theſe wiſe,
That but thou doe as I ſhall the deviſe
Thou ſhalt be ded, by him that al hath wrought:
At ſhortè wordis, thou ne ſcapiſt nought
Out of my paleis or that thou be dede
But thou conſent and werke aftir my rede;
Take this to the for full concluſioun.
This Hypermneſtra caſt her eyin doun,
And quoke as doeth the leſe of aſpis grene,
Ded wext her hew, and like aſhin to ſene,
And ſayid; Lorde and fathir, all your will,
Aſtir my might, God wote I ſhall fulfill,
So it be to me no conſuſion.
I n'ill (quod he) have non exception,
And out he caught a knife as raſour kene;
Hide this (quod he) that it be nat iſene,
And when thine huſbonde is to bed ygo,
While that he ſlepith cut his throte atwo,
For in my dreme it is ywarnid me
How that my nevewe ſhall my bane ybe,
But whiche I n'ot, wherefore I woll be ſiker;
If thou ſaie naie we two ſhall have a biker,
As I have ſaied, by him that I have ſworne.
This Hypermneſtra' hath nigh her wit forlorn,
And for to paſſe harmeleſſe out of that place
She grauntid him, there was non othir grace.
And therewithall a coſtrill takith he,
And ſaied, Hereof a draught or two, or thre,
Yeve him to drinke when he goith to reſte,
And he ſhall ſlepe as long as er the leſte,
The narcotikes and apics ben ſo ſtrong,
And go thy waie, leſt that him thinke to long.
Out cometh the bride, and with full ſobre chere,
As is of maidins oftin the manere,
To chambir brought with revil and with ſong:
And ſhortlie, leſte this talè be to long,
This Lino and ſhe beth bin brought to bed,
And every wight out at the dore him ſped.
The night is waſtid, and he fell aſlepe;
Full tendirly beginnith ſhe to wepe;
She riſt her up, and dredefully ſhe quaketh,
As doeth the braunch that Zephyrus yſhaketh;
And huſht were all in Aragone that cite:
As colde as any froſte now wexith ſhe,
For pite by the herte ſtrainid her ſo,
And drede of deth doith her ſo moche wo,
Tr at thryis doune ſhe fill; in ſoche a were
She riſte her up, and ſtekereth here and there,
And on her handis faſtè lokith ſhe;
Alas!-quod ſhe, ſhall myne handes blodie be!
I am a maidin, and by my nature,
And by my ſemblaunt, and by my veſture,
Myne haundis ben not ſhapin for a knife,
As for to revin no man fro his life:
What devill have I with the knife to do?
And ſhall I have my throte ycorve atwo?
Then ſhall I blede, alas! and be yſhende:
And nedis of this thing mote have an ende;
Or he or I mote nedis leſe our life:
Now certis (quod ſhe) ſens I am his wife,
And hath my feithe, yet is it bette for me
For to be dedde in wifely honeſte
Then be a traitour living in my ſhame:
Be as be maie, for erneſt or for game,
He ſhall awake, and riſe and go his waie
Out at this guttir er that it be daie;
And wept full tendirlie upon his face,
And in her armis gan him to embrace,
And him ſhe roggith and awakith ſoft;
And at the windowe lepe he fro the loft
When ſhe hath warnid him and doen him bote.
This Lino ſwift ywas and light of fote,
And from his wife he ran a full gode pace:
This ſelie woman is ſo weke, alas!
And helpleſſe, ſo that er ſhe ferrè went
Her cruill fathir did her for to hent.
Alas, Lino! why art thou ſo unkinde?
Why ne haſt thou remembrid in thy minde
And takin her and led her forthe with the?
For when ſhe ſawe that gone awaie was he,
And that ſhe ne might not ſo faſt ygo,
Ne folowin him, ſhe ſate doune right tho
Til ſhe was caught and fettrid in priſon;
This Tale is ſaied for this concluſion.

A PRAISE OF WOMEN.

Al tho that lyſte of women ill to ſpeke,
And ſayin of 'hem worſe than they deſerve,
I pray to God that ther neckis to breke,
Or on ſome yll dethe mote tho janglirs ſterve,
For every man were holdin 'hem to ſerve,
And do 'hem worſhip, honour, and ſerviſe,
In every manir they beſt coude deviſe.

For we ought firſt to think on what manere
Thei bring us forth, and what pain thei endure
Firſt in our byrth, and ſith fro yere to yere
How buſily they done ther buſy cure
To kepe us fro every myſavinture
In our youthhed, whan that we have no might
Our ſelfe to kepe neythir by day nor night.

Alas! howe may we ſay on 'hem but wele
Of whom we were yfoſtred and ybore,
And ben all our ſocoure, and trewe as ſtele,
And for our ſake ful ofte they ſuffre ſore?
Without women were al our joye ylore,
Wherfore we ought al women to obey
In al godeneſſe; I can no more yſay.

This is wel knowin, and hath ben or this,
That women ben the cauſe of al lightneſſe,
Knighthode, norture, eſchewing al malis,
Encreſe of worſhip and of worthineſſe,
Therto curteys meke, grounde of alle godeneſſe,
Glad and mery, and trewe in every wiſe
That any gentle' hert can thinke or deviſe.

And though any would truſt to your untruth,
And to your faire wordis would aught aſſent,
In gode faith methinkith it wer grete ruth
That othre' women ſhould for ther gilt be ſhent
That ner knew ne wiſt nought of ther entent,
Ne liſt not to here the ſaire wordes ye write,
Whiche ye you paine fro daie to daie t' endite.

But who maie beware of your tales untrue
That ye ſo buſilie painte and endite?
For ye will ſwerin that ye nevir knewe
Ne ſawe the woman neither moche ne lite,
Save only her to whom ye had delite
As for to ſerve of all that er ye ſey,
And for her love muſt ye nedis dey.

Then wil ye ſwere that ye knew ner before
What Love was, ne his dredful obſervaunce,
But now ye felin that he can wounde ſore,
Wherefore ye put you' into her govirnaunce
Whom Love hath ordeined you to ſerve and do plesaunce
With al your might your lityl liv'is ſpace,
Whiche endith ſone but if ſhe doe you grace;

And then to bedde will ye you ſone ydrawe,
And ſone your ſelvis ſicke ye will then fain,
And ſwerin faſt your ladie hath you ſlawe,
And brought you ſodainly in ſo high pain
That fro your deth maie no man you reſtrain,
With a danngerous loke of her eyin two,
That to your dethe muſt ye nedis go.

Thus will ye morne, thus will ye ſighin ſore,
As though your hert anon in two wold breſt,
And ſwerin faſt that ye maie live no more,
Myne owne ladie, that might if ye leſt
Bryngin myne herte ſomedele into reſt,
As if you liſt mercie on me to have,
Thus your untrouth will evir mercie crave.

Thus woll ye plainin tho you nothing ſmerte
Theſe innocent cretures for to begile,
And ſwere to 'hem ſo woundid is your herte
For love of them that ye maie live no while,
Scarſlie ſo long as one might go a mile;
So hyith Deth to bryng you to an ende
But if your ſoverain lady liſt you' amende.

And if ſhe comfort you in any wiſe
For routhe for pite' of your falſe othis fere,
So that ſhe weneth it be as you deviſe,
And wenith your herte be as ſhe maie here,
Thus to comfort and ſomwhat do you chere,
Then woll theſe janglirs deme of her full ill,
And ſaine ye have her fully at your will.

Lo, how redie ther tongis ben and preſt
To ſpekin harme of women cauſileſſe!
Alas! why might ye not as well ſaie the beſt
As for to demin 'hem thus giltileſſe?
In your herte iwis there' is no gentllneſſe
That of your own gilt liſte thus women fame;
Now by my trouth me thinke ye be to blame,

For of women comith this worldly wele,
Wherefore we ought worſhip 'hem evirmore,
And though it miſhap one we ought to bele,
For it is all thorough our falſe lore,
That daie and night we pain us evirmore
With many' an othe theſe women to begile
With falſe talis and many' a wickid wile.

And if falſhede ſhould be reckened and told
It n'ere in women iwis full trouth were
Not as in men is by a thouſande fold,
Fro all vicis iwis thei ſtandin clere,
In any thing that er I could of here,
But if entiſyng of theſe men it make,
That 'hem to flatteren connin nevir ſlake.

I would fain mete where evir ye coud here
Without mens tiſing women did amis;
There ye get 'hem ye lie fro yere to yere,
And many' a gabbyng ye make to' 'hem iwis,
For I could nevir here ne knowen er this
Where evir ye coude finde in any place
That evir women beſought you of grace.

There ye you painin with al your full might,
With all your herte and all your buſineſſe,
To pleſin 'hem aye both by daie and night,
Praying 'hem of ther grace and gentilneſſe
To have pite upon your grete diſtreſſe,
And that thei woldin on your pain have routh,
And ſe you not, frohin ye mene but trouth.

Thus maie ſein that thei ben fautleſſe,
And innocent to all your werkis ſlie;
And all your craftis that touchin falſneſſe
Thei knowe 'hem not, ne maie 'hem not eſpie;
So ſwerin ye that ye muſt nedis die
But if thei wouldin of ther womanhedde
Upon your trouth rewe er that ye be dedde.

And then your Lady and your hert'is quene
Ye callin 'hem, and therewith ye ſigh ſore,
And ſaie, My ladie', I trowe that it be ſene
In what plite that I have livid full yore,
But now I hope that ye wollin no more
In theſe pains ſuffre me for to dwell,
For of all godeneſſe iwis ye be the' well.

Lo, whiche a paintid proceſſe can ye make
Theſe harmleſſe creturis for to begile!
And when thei ſlepe ye painin you to wake,
And to bethinke you' on many' a wickid wile;
But ye ſhal ſe the daie that ye ſhall curſe the while
That ye ſo buſily did your entent
'Hem to begile that falſhed nevir ment.

For this ye know wel, though I wouldin lie,
In women is all trouth and ſtedfaſtneſſe,
For in gode faithe I nevir of 'hem ſie
But moche worſhip, bounte, and gentilneſſe,
Right commyng, faire, and full of mekèneſſe,
Gode and glad, and lowlie I you enſure,
Is this godelie and angelike creture.

And if it happe a man be in diſeſe
She doeth her buſineſſe and her full paine
With al her might him to comfort and pleſe,
If fro his diſeſe ſhe might hym reſtrain:
In worde ne dede iwis ſhe woll not faine;
With al her might ſhe doth her buſineſſe
To bryngin hym out of his hevineſſe.

Lo, here what gentilleſſe theſe women have!
If we could knowe it for our rudèneſſe
How buſie thei be us to kepe and ſave
Bothe in hele and alſo in ſickèneſſe,
And alwaie right ſorie for our diſtreſſe;
In every manir thus ſhewe thei routhe,
That in 'hem is all godeneſſe and all trouthe.

And ſith we find in 'hem gentilneſſe, trouth,
Worſhip, bounte, and kindneſſe, evirmore,
Let nevir this gentilleſſe through your ſlouth
In ther kinde trouth be evir aught forlore
That in women is and hath ben full yore,
For in revèrence of heven'is quene
We ought to worſhip all women that bene;

For of all cretures that were get and borne
This wote ye well a woman was the beſt;
By her was recovered the blis we' had lorne,
And through that woman ſhall we come to reſt
And ben iſavid, if that our ſelf leſt;
Wherefore me thinkith if that we had grace
We oughten honour women in every place.

Therefore I rede that to our liv'is ende,
Fro this time forth while that we havin ſpace,
That we have treſpaced purſue to amende,
Praying our Ladie, the welle of all grace,
To bryngin us unto that bliſfull place
There as ſhe' and all gode women ſhall be' in fere,
In hevin above, emong the angils clere.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCY.

M. Aleyn, Secretary to the King of Fraunce, formed this dialogue between a gentleman and a gentlewoman, who finding no mercy at her hand, dyeth for ſorrow.

Halfe in a dreme, not fully well awaked,
The goldin Slepe me wrapped undir his wyng,
Yet not forthy I roſe, and well nigh naked,
Al ſodainly my ſelf rememberyng
Of a mattir, levyng all othir thyng,
Which I muſt doe withoutin more delaie
For them whiche I ne durſt not diſobaie.

My charge was this, to tranſlate by and by,
(All thyng forgive) as parte of my penaunce,
A boke callid *La bel Dame ſans Mercy*,
Whiche Maiſtir Aleine made of remembraunce,
Chief Secretarie with the Kyng of Fraunce;
And hereupon a while I ſtode muſyng,
And in my ſelf greatly imaginyng

What wiſe I ſhould perform the ſaid proceſſe
Conſidiryng by gode adviſement
My unconnyng and my grete ſimpleneſſe,
And ayenward the ſtraite commaundement
Whiche that I had; and thus in myne entent
I was vexid and tournid up and doune,
And yet at laſt, as in concluſioun,

I caſt my clothis on, and went my waie,
This foreſaid charge having in remembraunce,
Till I came to a luſtie grene valaie
Full of flouris, to ſe a grete pleſaunce,
And ſo boldly, with ther benigne ſuffraunce
Which redin this boke, touching this matere
Thus I began, if it pleſe you to here.

Not long ago, ridyng an eſie paas,
I fell in though of joyful deſperate,
With grete diſeſe and pain, ſo that I was
Of all lovirs the moſt unfortunate,
Sith by his darte moſte cruill full of hate
The Deth hath take my ladie and maiſtreſſe,
And left me ſole, thus diſcomfite and mate,
Sore languiſhyng and in waie of diſtreſſe.

Then ſaid I thus, It fallith me to ceſſe
Eithir to rime or ditees for to make,
And ſurely to makin a full promeſſe
To laugh no more, but wepe in clothis blake
My joyfull tyme (alas!) now doeth it ſlake,
For in my ſelf I fele no manir eſe,
Let it be written, ſoche fortune (as I take)
Which neithir me nor non othir doth pleſe.

If it were ſo my wyll or myne entent
Conſtrainid were a joyfull thing to write,
My penne coud nevir knowin whar it ment,
To ſpeke thereof my tongue hath no delite;
Tho with my mouthe I laugh mochil or lite
Mine eyin ſhould make a countenance untrue,
My herte alſo would have therof deſpite,
The wepyng teris have ſo large iſſue.

Theſe ſicke lovirs I leve that to 'hem longes,
Which lede ther life in hope of elegeaunce,
This is to ſaie, to make balades and ſonges
Every of 'hem as thei fele ther grevaunce,
For ſhe that was my joye and my pleſauuce,
Whoſe ſoule I praie God of his mercie ſave!
She hath my will, myne hert'is ordinaunce,
Which lyith here within this tombe igrave.

For this tyme forthe tyme is to hold my pees;
It werieth me this mattir for to trete;
Let othir lovirs put 'hem ſelfe in prees,
Their ſeſon is, my tyme is now forgete;
Fortune by ſtrength the forcir hath unſhete
Wherein was ſperde all my worldly richeſſe,
And all the godis which that I have gete
In my beſt tyme of youth and luſtineſſe.

Love hath me kept undir his govirnaunce;
If I miſdid God graunt me forgiveneſſe!
If I did well yet felt I no pleſaunce,
It cauſid neithir joye nor hevineſſe,

For when ſhe dyid that was my maiſtres
My welfare then ymade the ſame purchaſe;
The Deth hath ſhette my bondis of witneſſe,
Which for nothing myne hert ſhal nevir paſe.
In this grete thought ſore troublid in my mind,
Alone thus rode I all the morrow tide,
Till at the laſt it happid me to finde
The place wherein I caſt me to abide
When that I had no furthir for to ride,
And as I went my lodgyng to purvaie
Right ſone I herd a little me beſide,
In a gardin, where minſtrels gan to plaie:
With that anone I went me backir more,
My ſelf and I, me thought we were inow,
But twaine that wer my frendis here before
Had me eſpied, and yet I wote not how
Thei came for me; awaiewarde I me drowe,
Somwhat by force, ſomwhat by ther requeſt,
That in no wiſe I coud my ſelf reſcowe,
But nedis I muſt come in and ſe the feſt.
At my commyng the ladies everichone
Bad me welcome, God wote ſo gentillie,
And made me chere every one by one
A grete dele bettir than I was worthie,
And of ther grace ſhewed me grete curtiſie
With gode diſport, bicauſe I ſhould not mourne:
That daie I bode ſtill in ther companie,
Whiche was to me a gracious ſojourne.
The bordis were ſpred in right lityl ſpace,
The ladies ſat eche as ſhe ſemid beſt;
There were no dedly ſervauntes in the place,
But choſin men, right of the godelyeſt,
And ſome there wer, peraventure moſt freſheſt,
That ſawin ther judgis right full demure,
Withoutin ſemblaunt eithir to moſte or leſt,
Notwithſtandyng thei had 'hem undir cure.
Emong all othir one I gan eſpie
Which in grete thought ful oftin came and went,
As one that had ben raviſhed uttirly,
In his language not gretly diligent;
His countinaunce he kept with grete turment,
But his deſire farre paſſid his reſon,
For er his eye went aftir his entent
Full many' a tyme when it was no ſeſon.
To makin chere ſorely hymſelf he pained,
And outwardly he fainid grete gladneſſe;
To ſing alſo by force he was conſtrained,
For no pleſaunce but verie ſhamefaſtneſſe,
For the complainte of his moſte hevineſſe
Came to his voice alwaie without requeſt,
Like as the ſoune of birdis doeth expreſſe
When thei ſing loude in frithe or in foreſt.
Othir there were that ſervid in the hall,
But none like hym, as aftir myne adviſe,
For he was pale, and ſomwhat lene withall,
His ſpeche alſo tremblid in ſerfull wiſe,
And er alone but when he did ſerviſe;
All blacke he were, and no deviſe but plain;
Me thought by him, as my witte coud ſuffiſe,
His herte was nothyng in his owne demain.
To ſeſt 'hem all he did his diligence,
And well he coud, right as it ſemid me,
But evirmore when he was in preſence
His chere was doen, it n'olde none othir be;
His ſcholemaiſtir had ſoche auctorite
That all the while he bode ſtill in that place
Speke cou'd he not, but upon her beaute
He lokid ſtill with a right pitous face.
With that his hedde he tournid at the laſt
For to beholde the ladies everichone,
But er in one he ſet his eye ſtedfaſt
On her whiche that his thought was moſte upon,
For of his eyen the ſhot I knewe anone,
Which ſerfull was; with right humble requeſtes;
Then to my ſelf I ſaied, by God alone
Soche one was I or that I ſawe theſe jeſtes.
Out of the preſe he went full eſily
To make ſtable his hevie countinaunce,
And wote ye well he ſighid wondirly
For his ſorowes and wofull remembrance,
Then in hymſelf he made his ordinance,
And forthwithall came to bryng in the meſſe,
But for to judge his moſte wofull penance
God wote it was a pitous entremeſſe.
Aftir dinir anone thei 'hem avaunced
To daunce above the folk everychone,
And forthwithal this hevie man he daunced
Somtime with twaine and ſomtimis with one;
Unto 'hem all his chere was aftir one,
Now here, now there, as fell by avinture,
But er emong he drewe to her alone
Whiche that he moſte drede of livyng creture.
To mine adviſe gode was his purveiaunce
When he her choſe to his maiſtreſſe alone,
If that her herte were ſet to his pleſaunce
As moche as was her beautéous perſone,
For who ſo evir ſetteth his truſt upon
The report of the eyen withoutin more
He might be dedde and gravin undir ſtone
Or he ſhould his hert'is eſe reſtore.
In her failid nothyng that I coud geſſe
One wiſe nor othir, privie nor aperte;
A gariſon ſhe was of godelineſſe,
To make a frontier for a lovirs herte;
Right yong and freſhe, a woman full coverte,
Aſſurid wele of porte and eke of chere,
Wel at her eſe, withoutin wo or ſmerte,
All underneth the ſtanderde of Dangere.
To ſe the feſt it weried me full ſore,
For hevie joye doeth ſore the herte travaile,
Out of the preſe I me withdrawe therfore,
And ſet me doune alone behinde a traile
Full of levis, to ſe a grete mervaile,
With grene wrethis iboundin wondirly,
The levis were ſo thicke withoutin faile
That thoroughout no man might me eſpie.
To this ladie he came full curtiſly
When he thought time to daunce with her a trace,
Set in an herbir made full pleſantly,
Thei reſtid 'hem fro thens but lityl ſpace,
Nigh 'hem were none of a certain compace,
But onely thei, as farre as I coud ſe;
Save the traile there I had ychoſe my place
Ther was no more betwene 'hem two and me.
I hord the lovir ſighyng wondir ſore,
For aie the more the ſorir it hym ſought,
His inward paine he coud not kepe in ſtore,
Nor for to ſpeke ſo hardie was he nought;

His leche was nere, the gretir was his thought:
He musid sore to conquere his desire,
For no man maie to more penaunce be brought
Then in his hete to bryng hym to the fire.
The herte began to swell within his chest,
So sore strainid for anguishe and for pain,
That all to pecis almoste it to brest,
When both at ones so sore it did constrain.
Desire was bolde, but shame it gan restrain,
That one was large, the othir was full close;
No little charge was laied on hym certain
To kepe soche werre and have so many sose.
Full ofun times to speke himself he pained,
But shamefastnesse and drede saied evir nale,
Yet at the last so sore he was constrained,
When he full long had put it in delaie,
To this ladie right thus then gan he sale,
With dredefull voice, wepyng, halfe in a rage;
For me was purveied an unhappie daie
When I first had a sight of your visage:
I suffre pain, God wote, full hote brenning,
To cause my deth, all for my true servise,
And I se well ye recke thereof nothing,
Nor take no hede of it in no kinde wise,
But when I speke aftir my best advise
Ye reke it nought, but make thereof a game,
And though I sewe so grete an entirprise
Yet peirith not your worship nor your fame.
Alas! what should it be to' you prejudice
If that a man doe love you faithfully?
To your worship eschewyng every vice,
So I am yours, and will be verily;
I chalenge nought of right, and reson why,
For I am whole submit to your service;
Right as you list it be right so will I,
To binde my self where I was in fraunchise.

L'amant.

Though it be so that I can not deserve
To have your grace, but alwaie live in drede,
Yet suffre me you for to love and serve
Without maugre of your moste godelihede;
Both faith and trouth I give your womanhede
And my service without any callyng;
Love hath me bound withoutin wage or mede
To be your man and leve all othir thyng.

La Dame.

When this ladie had herd al this language
She gave answere full soft and demurely,
Without chaungyng of colour or corage,
Nothyng in hast, but full mesurably;
Me thinkith, Sir, your thought is grete foly;
Purpose ye nought your labour for to cese,
For thinkith not whilis ye live and I
In this mattir to set your herte in pese.

L'amant.

Ther maie none make the pece but onely ye,
Which are the ground and cause of all this war,
For with your eyen the lettirs writtin be
By whiche I am defied and put afarre;
Your plesaunt loke, my very lod starre,
Was made heraude of thilke same defiaunce
Whiche utterly behight me for to barre
My faithfull trust and all myne affyaunce.

La Dame.

To live in wo he hath grete fantasse,
And of his hert also but slipper holde,
That onely for beholdyng of an eye
Can not abide in pece, as reson wolde;
Other or me if ye list ye maie beholde;
Our eyen are made to loke, why should we spare?
I take no kepe neithir of yong ne olde;
Who selith smart I counsaile hym beware.

L'amant.

If it be so one hurte on othir sore
In his defaute that selith the grevaunce,
Of very right a man may do no more,
Yet reson would it were in remembraunce,
And sith Fortune onily by her chaunce
Hath cansid me to suffre all this pain
By your beautie, with all the circumstaunce,
Why list ye have me in so grete disdain?

La Dame.

To your persone ne have I no disdain,
Nor nevir had truelie, ne nought will have,
Nor right grete love nor hatred in certain,
Nor your counsaile to knowe so God me save;
If that soche love be in your minde igrave,
That lityl thyng maie doe you displesaunce,
You to begile or make you for to rave,
I will not causin no soche encombraunce.

L'amant.

What er it be that me hath thus purchased
Wenyng hath not decevid me certain,
But fervent love so sore hath me ichased
That I unware am castin in your chaine;
And sith so is, as Fortune list ordaine,
All my welfare is in your handis fall,
In eschewyng of more mischevous paine
Who soniest dieth his care is lest of all.

La Dame.

This sickneste is right esie to endure,
But fewe peple it causith for to die,
But what thei mene I knowe it very sure,
Of more comfort to drawe the remedie;
Soche be there now plainyng full pitouslie
That sele, God wote, not althir gretist pain;
And if so be love hurte so grevouslie,
Leste harme it wer one forowful then twain.

L'amant.

Alas! Madame, if that it might you plese,
Moche bet it were by waie of gentilneste
Of one lorie to make twain well at ese
Then hym to destroie that liveth in distreste,
For my desire is neithir more nor leste
But my service to doe for your plesaunce,
In eschewyng all manir doubleneste
To make two joies in stede of one grevaunce.

La Dame.

Of love I seke neithir plesaunce nor ese,
Nor have I therein no grete affiaunce;
Though ye be sick it doeth me nothing plese,
Also I take no hede of your plesaunce:
Chese who so will ther hertis to avaunce,
Free am I now and fre will I endure;
To be rulid by mann'is govirnaunce
For yerthly gode naie, that I you ensure.

L'amant.

Love, which that joy and ſorow doth depart,
Hath ſet the ladies out of all ſervage,
And largily doeth graunt 'hem for ther part
Lordſhip and rule of every maner of age;
The pore ſervaunt nought hath of avantage
But what he maie get onely by purcheſſe,
And he that ones to Love doeth his homage
Full oftin tynies dere bought is the richeſſe.

La Dame.

Ladies, be not ſo ſimple, thus I mene,
So dull of witte, ſo ſottid in folie,
That for wordis which ſaid be of the ſplene,
In faire language paintid full pleſauntlie,
Whiche ye and mo holde ſcholis of dailie,
To make 'hem all grete wondirs to ſuppoſe,
But ſone thei can awaie their heddis wrie,
And to faire ſpeche lightly ther eris cloſe.

L'amant.

There is no man that janglith buſilie,
And ſetteth his herte and al his minde therfore,
That by reſon maie plain ſo pitouſlie
As he that hath moche hevineſſe in ſtore;
Whoſe hedde is whole and ſaieth that it is ſore
His fainid chere is harde to kepe in mewe,
But thought, whiche is unfainid evirmore,
The workis previth as the wordis ſhewe.

La Dame.

Love is ſubtill, and hath a grete awaite,
Sharp in working, in gabbing grete pleſaunce,
And can hym venge of ſoche as by diſceite
Would fele and knowe his ſecrete govirnaunce,
And makith 'hem to' obeie his ordinaunce
By cherefull waies, as in 'hem is ſuppoſed,
But when thei fallin into repentaunce
Then in a rage ther counſaile is diſcloſed.

L'amant.

Sith for as moche as God and eke Nature
Hath avaunced love to ſo hie degre,
Moche ſharpe is the poinct, thus am I right ſure,
Yet grevith more the faute, where er it be;
Who hath no celde of bete hath no deinte;
The' one for that othir aſkid is expreſſe;
And of pleſaunce knowith none certainte
But it be one in thought and hevineſſe.

La Dame.

As for pleſaunce, it is not alwaie one,
That you think ſwete I think it bittir pain;
Ye maie not me conſtrain, nor yet right none,
Aftir your luſte to love; that is but vain;
To chalenge love by right was nevir ſein,
But herte aſſent, before bonde and promiſe,
For ſtrength and force ne maie not er attain
A will that ſtandeth enfeffid in franchiſe.

L'amant.

Right faire laide! God mote I nevir pleſe
If that I ſeke othir right in this caſe
But for to ſhewe you plainly my diſeſe,
And your mercie to' abide and eke your grace;
If I purpoſe your honour to deface,
Or evir did, God and Fortune me ſhende,
And that I net unrightfully purchace
One onelie joye unto my liv'is ende.

La Dame.

Ye and othir that ſwere ſoche othis faſte,
And ſo condempne and curſin to and fro,
Full ſikirly ye wene your othis laſte
No lengir then the wordis ben ago,
And God and eke his ſainctis laugh alſo;
In ſoche ſweryng there is no ſtedfaſtneſſe,
And theſe wretchis that have ful truſt thereto
Aftir thei wepe and wailin in diſtreſſe.

L'amant.

He hath no coūrage of a man truelie
That ſechith pleſaunce worſhip to diſpiſe,
Nor to be callid, for he' is not worthie
The yerth to touch, the aire in no kind wiſe,
A truſtie herte, a mouthe without feintiſe,
Thus by the ſtrength of every manir name,
And who that laieth his faith for little priſe
He leſith both his worſhip and his fame.

La Dame.

A curſid herte, a mouthe that is curteiſe,
Full well ye wote thei be not accordyng,
Yet fainid chere right ſone maie 'hem apeiſe,
Where of malice is ſet all ther workyng,
Full falſe ſemblaunt thei bere and true ſemyng,
Ther name, ther fame, ther tonguis, ben but fained,
Worſhip in 'hem is put in forgettyng,
Nought repentid, nor in no wiſe complained.

L'amant.

Who thinkith ill no gode maie him befall,
God of his grace graunt eche man his deſert!
But for his love emong your thoughtis all
As thinke upon my wofull ſorowes ſmert,
For of my paine whethir your tendir hert
Of ſwete pitie be not therewith agreved,
And of your grace to me were diſcovert,
That by your mene ſone ſhould I be releved.

La Dame.

A lightſome herte, a folie of pleſaunce,
Are moche bettir the leſſe while thei abide,
Thei make you think and bring you in a traunce,
But that ſikeneſſe will ſone be remedide;
Reſpite your thought, and put all this aſide;
Full gōde diſporte ywerieth me all daie;
To helpe nor hurte my will is not aplide;
Who troweth me not I let hym paſſe awaie.

L'amant.

Who hath a birde, a faucon, or a hounde,
That ſoloweth hym for love in every place,
He cheriſheth him and kepith him ful ſound,
Out of his ſight he will not hym enchace,
And I, that ſet my wittis in this cace
On you alone, witheutin any change,
Am put undir, moche farthir out of grace,
And leſſe ſet by, then othir that be ſtraunge.

La Dame.

Though I make chere to every man about
For my worſhip and for myne own franchiſe,
To you I n'ill doe ſo withoutin doubt,
In eſchewyng all manir prejudiſe,
For wote ye well Love is ſo little wiſe,
And in bileve ſo lightly will be brought,
That he takith all at his owne deviſe
Of thing God wote that ſervith him of nought.

L'amant

If I by love and by my true ſervíſe
Leſe the gode chere that ſtraungirs have alwaie
Whereof ſhall ſerve my trouthe in any wiſe
Leſſe then to him that cometh and goeth al daie,
Whiche holdeth of you nothyng, that is no naie?
Alſo in you is loſt, as to' my ſemyng,
All curtiſie, whiche of reſon will ſaie
That *Love for love* were lawfull deſiryng.

La Dame.

Curtiſie is alyid wondir nere
To worſhip, whiche hym lovith tendirly,
And he will not be bounde for no praiere,
Nor for no giftes, I ſaie you verily,
But his gode chere depart full largily
Where hym lykith, as his conceipt will fall;
Guerdon conſtrained, a gift doen thankfully,
Theſe twain can ner accord, nor nevir ſhal.

L'amant.

As for guerdon, I ſeke none in this cace,
For that deſerte to me it is to hie,
Wherfore I aſke your pardon and your grace,
Sith me behovith deth or your mercie;
To give the gode where it wantith truly
That were reſon and a curtiſe manere,
And to your own moche bettir were worthy
Then to ſtraungirs to ſhew 'hem lovely chere.

La Dame.

What cal ye gode? fain would I that I wiſt;
That pleſith one an othir ſmertith ſore,
But of his owne to large is he that liſt
Give moche and leſin his gode name therſore;
One ſhould not make a graunt, little ne more,
But the requeſt were right well accordyng:
If worſhip be not kept and ſet before
All that is leſte is but a little thyng.

L'amant.

Into this worlde was foundin nevir none,
Nor undir hevin creãture ibore,
Nor nevir ſhall, ſave onely your perſone,
To whom your worſhip touchith halfe ſo ſore
But me, whiche have no ſeſon leſſe ne more
Of youth ne age but ſtill in your ſervice;
I have no eyen, no wit, nor mouthe, in ſtore,
But all be givin to the ſame office.

La Dame.

A ful grete charge hath he withoutin faile
That his worſhip kepith in ſikirneſſe,
But in daungir he ſettith his travail
That ſeffith it with othirs buſineſſe;

To hym that longith honour and nobleſſe
Upon none othir ſhould not be awaite,
For of his owne ſo moche hath he the leſſe
That of othir moche ſoloweth the conceite.

L'amant.

Your eyen hath ſet the print which that I ſeke
Within my herte, that where ſo er I go
If I doe thyng that founith unto wele
Nedes muſt it cum from you and fro no me;
Fortune will this, that I for wele or wo
My life endure, your mercy abidyng,
And verie right will that I thinke alſo
Of your worſhip above all othir thyng.

La Dame.

To your worſhip ſe well, for that is nede,
That ye ſpende not your ſeſon all in vain;
As touchyng myne I rede you take no hede,
By your follie to put your ſelfe in pain;
To overcome is gode and to reſtrain
An herte which is decevid follilie,
For Worſe it is to breke then bowe certain;
Bettir to bowe then to fall ſodainly.

L'amant.

Now, faire ladie! thinke ſith it firſt began
That Love hath ſet mine herte undir his cure
It nevir might, ne truelie I ne can,
None othir ſerve while I ſhall here endure,
In moſt fre wiſe thereof I make you ſure,
Which maie not be withdraw, this is no naie;
I muſt abide all manir advinture,
For I ne maie put to nor take awaie.

La Dame.

I holde it for no gift in ſothfaſtneſſe
That one offirith where it is forſake,
For ſoche a gifte' is abandonyng expreſſe,
That with worſhip ayen maie not be take;
He hath an herte full fell that liſt to make
A gift lightlie that put is to refuſe,
But he is wiſe that ſoche conceipt will ſlake,
So that hym nede neithir ſtudie ne muſe.

L'amant.

He ſhould not muſe that hath his ſervice ſpent
On her whiche is a ladie honourable,
And if I ſpende my time to that entent
Yet at the leſt I am not reprovable
Of fainid harte, to thinke I am unable,
Or I miſtoke when I made this requeſt,
By whiche Love hath of enterpriſe notable
So many hertis gottin by conqueſt.

La Dame.

If that ye liſte doe aftir my counſaile
Seche a fairir and of more highir fame,
Whiche in ſervice of love will you prevaile,
Aftir your thought, accordyng to the ſame;
He hurtith bothe his worſhip and his name
That follily for twain himſelf will trouble,
And he alſo leſith his aftir game
That ſurely can not ſet his poinctis double.

L'amant.

This your counſaile, by ought that I can ſe,
Is bettir ſaid than doen, to myne adviſe,
Though I beleve it not forgive it me:
Mine herte is ſoche, ſo whole without feintiſe,
That I ne maie give credence in no wiſe
To thyng whiche is not founyng unto truth:
Othir counſaile I ſe' is but fantaſiſe
Save of your grace to ſhewe pitie and ruth.

La Dame.

I holde hym wiſe that workith no folie,
And when hym liſt can leve and part therfro,
But in connyng he is to lerne truelie
That would himſelf conduite and can not ſo;
And he that will not aftir counſaile doe
His ſute he puttith into diſperaunce,
And all the gode that ſhould yfall hym to
Is loſt and dedde clene out of remembraunce.

L'amant.

Yet woll I ſhewe this mattir faithfullie
Whillis I live, what evir be my chaunce,
And if it hap that in my truthe I die
Then deth ſhall doe to me no diſpleſaunce,
But when that I by your hard ſufferaunce
Shall die ſo true, and with ſo grete a pain,
Yet ſhall it doe me moche the leſſe grevaunce
Then for to live a falſe lovir certain.

La Dame.

Of me get ye right noght, this is no fable,
I will to you be neithir hard nor ſtraite,
And right will not no man cuſtomable
To thinke ye ſhould be ſure of my conceite;
Who ſeebith ſorowe his be the receite;
Othir counſaile can I not ſele nor ſe,
Nor for to lerne I caſt me not to' awaite,
Who will thereof let him aſſaie for me.

L'amant.

Ones muſt it be aſſaied, that is no naie,
With ſoche as be of reputacion,
And of true love the right honour to paie
Of fre hartis gottin by due raunſome,
For frewil holdith this opinion,
That it is grete dureſſe ond diſcomforte
To kepe a herte in ſo ſtraite a priſon
That hath but one bodie for his diſporte.

La Dame.

I knowe ſo many cauſis marveilous
That I muſt nede of reſon thinke certain
Soche avinture is wondir perilous,
And yet well more the coming backe again,
Gode or worſhip thereof is ſeldome ſene,
Where I ne will make any ſoche araie,
As for to finde a pleſaunce but baraine
When it ſhall coſt ſo dere the firſt aſſaie.

L'amant.

Ye have no cauſe to doubt of this matter,
Nor you to meve with no ſoche fantaſiſe,
To put me farre all out as a ſtraunger,
For your godeneſſe can thinke and well adviſe
That I have made apriſe in every wiſe,
By whiche my truthe ſheweth opin evidence;
My long abidyng and my true ſervice
Maie well be knowen by plain experience.

La Dame.

Of verie right he maie be callid true,
And ſo muſt he be take in every place,
That can diſcerne and let as he ne knewe,
And kepe the gode if he it maie purchaſe;
For who that praieth or ſwereth in any caſe
Right well ye wote in that no trouth is preved;
Soch hath there ben and are that gettin grace,
And leſe it ſone when thei have it acheved.

L'amant.

If truthe me cauſe, by vertue ſovrain,
To ſhewe gode love and alwaie find contrarie,
And cheriſhe the whiche ſleeth me with the pain,
This is to me a lovely adverſarie,
When that Pitie, whiche long on ſlepe doth tarie,
Hath ſet the fine of all my hevineſſe,
Yet her comfort, to me moſte neceſſarie,
Shall ſet my will more ſure in ſtableneſſe.

La Dame.

The woful wight what maie he think or ſay,
The contrarie of all joye and gladneſſe,
A ſicke bodie, his thought is ferre alwaie
From 'hem that felin no ſore nor ſickeneſſe;
Thus hurtis ben of divers buſineſſe,
Whiche love hath putt unto grete hinderaunce,
And truthe alſo put in forgetfulneſſe,
When thei full ſore begin to ſigh aſkaunce.

L'amant.

Now God defende but he be harmeleſſe
Of all worſhip or gode that maie befall
That to werſt tournith by his leudeneſſe
A gift of grace or any thyng at all
That his ladie vouchſafe upon hym call,
Or cheriſh hym in honourable wiſe;
In that defaute what er he be that fall
Deſervith more than deth to ſuffre twiſe.

La Dame.

There is no judge iſet on ſoche treſpace,
By whiche of right love maie recovered be,
One curſith faſt, an othir doth manace,
Yet dyith none, as farre as I can ſe,
But kepe ther courſe alwaie in one degre,
And evirmore ther labour doeth encreſe
To bryng ladies, by ther grete ſubtilte,
For othirs gilte, in ſorowe and diſeſe.

L'amant.

All be it ſo one doeth ſo grete offence
And is not dedde nor put to no juſtice,
Right well I wote hym gainith no defence,
But he muſt ende in full miſchevous wiſe,
And all ever ſaied God will hym diſpiſe,
For falſhed is all full of curſidneſſe,
That his worſhip may ner have entirpriſe
Where it reignith and hath the wilfulneſſe.

Upon a plain to abide all manir ſhowers:
I can no more but aſke of 'hem ſocours
At whoſe requeſt thou wer made in this wiſe,
Commaundyng me with body and ſerviſe.
Right thus I make an ende of this proſſes,
Beſechyng hym that all hath in balaunce
That no true man be vexid cauſeleſſe
As this man was; whiche is of remembraunce;
And all that doen ther faithfull obſervaunce,
And in ther trouth purpoſe 'hem to endure
I praie God ſonde 'hem bettir avinture.

THE ASSEMBLE OF LADIES.

A gentlewoman dreameth that ſhe ſeeth a greate number of Ladies put up their billes of complaint before a judge, who promiſeth to reliev: their grievances.

In September', at the fallinge of the lefe,
The freſhe ſeſon was altogidir done,
And of the corne was gathirid the ſhefe,
In a gardine, aboute twayne aftir none,
Ther were Ladies walking, as was ther wone,
Foure in nombre, as to my minde doth fall,
And I the fifthe, the ſimpliſt of 'hem al.

Of gentilwomen faire there were alſo
Diſporting 'hem everiche aftir her giſe,
In croſſe aleis walking by two and two,
And ſome alone, aftir ther fantaſies;
Thus occupied we were in diverſe wiſe,
And yet in trouthe we were nat al alone,
There werin knightes and ſquiris many one.

Whereof I ſerved? one of 'hem aſkid me:
I ſaid ayen, as it fel in my thought,
To walke aboute the maſe in certainte,
As a hedeleſs woman that nothing rought.
He aſkid me ayen whom that I fought,
And of my colour why I was ſo pale?
Forſothe (quod I) and therby lithe a tale.

That muſt me wete, (quod he) and that anone;
Tel on, let ſe, and make no tarying,
Abide, (quod I) ye ben a haſtie one;
I let you wete it is no lityl thing,
But for bicauſe ye have a grete longing
In your deſire this proceſſe for to here
I ſhal you tel the plaine of this matere.

It happid thus' that in an aftirnone
My felauſhip and I by one aſſent,
Whan al othir beſineſſis were done,
To paſſe our time into this maſe we went,
And toke our waies eche aftir our entent,
Some went inward and went they had gon out,
Some ſtonde in the mid and loked all about.

And, ſoth to ſay, ſome were ful ferre behinde,
And right anon as ferforthe as the beſt,
Othir ther were ſo mafid in ther minde
Al waies were gode for 'hem both eſt and weſt;
Thus went they forth and had but lityl reſt,
And ſome ther courage dyd 'hem fore aſſaile,
For very wrathe they dyd ſtep o'er the raile;

And as they ſought 'hem ſelvin to and fro,
I gate my ſelf a lityl avauntage,
Al forweried I might no furthir go,
Though I had won right grete for my viage,
So came I forthe into a ſtraite paſſage,
Which brought me to an herbir faire and grene,
Ymade with benchis ful crafty and clene;

That as me thoughtin there might no creture
Deviſe a bette by dewe proporcioun,
Safe it was cloſid wel I you enſure,
With maſonrye of compace environn,
Ful ſecretly with ſtairis goyng down
In myddes the place with turning whele certain,
And upon that a potte of margelaine,

With margerettes growinge in ordinaunce
To ſhewe 'hem ſelfe as folke went to and fro,
That to beholde it was a grete pleſaunce,
And how they were accompainid with mo,
Ne momblineſſe and ſonèneſſe alſo,
The poure penſis were not diſlogid there,
Ne, God wote ther place was every where.

The flore and bench was pavid faire and ſmothe
With ſtonis ſquare of many divers hewe,
So wel joynid that for to ſay the ſoth
Al ſemid one, that no one othir knewe,
And undirnith the ſtremis newe and newe,
As ſilvir bright, ſpringing in ſodhe a wiſe,
That whence it came ye coude it not deviſe.

A lityl while ywas I al alone
Beholding wel this delectable place,
My felawſhip were coming everichone,
So muſte we nedis abyde for a ſpace,
Remembiring of many divers cace
Of tyme ypaſſid yore with ſighis depe,
I ſet me downe, and there I fel aſlepe.

And as I ſlept me thought there came to me
A gentylwoman metely of ſtature,
Of grete worſhip ſhe ſemid for to be,
Atyrid wel. not high, but by meſure,
Her countinaunce full ſad was and demure,
Her colours blewe al that ſhe had upon;
Ther ne came no mo but her ſelfe alone.

Her gowne wel was embraudrid certainly
With ſtonis ſette aftir her owne deviſe
In her purfillis, her worde by and by
Bien & Loyalement, as I coude deviſe;
Than praide I her in any manir wiſe
That of her name I might have remembraunce;
She ſaid ſhe was callid Perſeveraunce.

So furthirmore to ſpekin was I bolde,
Where ſhe dwellid I prayed her for to ſay?
And ſhe againe ful curtiſly me tolde,
My dwelling is and hath be many' a day
With a lady. What lady? I you pray.
Of gret eſtate, thus warne I you (quod ſhe,)
What cal ye her? Her name is Loyalte.

In what office ſtonde ye or what degre?
(Quod I to her) that would I wete right faine.
I am, (quod ſhe) unworthy though I be,
Of her chambre her uſhir in certaine,
This rodde I bere as for a tokin plaine,
Lyke as ye knowe the rule in ſoche ſervice
Apertaining is to the ſame office.

She chargid me by her commaundément
To warne you and your felawes everichone
That ye ſhulde come there as ſhe is preſent
For a counſaile whiche ſhall be nowe anone,
Or ſevin dayis be comin and gone;
And furthirmore, ſhe bad that I ſhulde ſay
Excuſis there might be none nor delay.

Anothir thing was not forget behinde,
Whiche in no wiſe I wolde but that ye knewe;
Remembre wel and bere it in your minde
Al your felawes and ye muſt come in blewe
Everlyche, your matirs for to ſewe,
With more, whiche I pray you to thinke upon,
Your wordis on your ſelvis everychon.

And be not abaſhed in no manir wiſe,
As many ben, in ſoche an high preſence;
Make your requeſt as ye can beſt deviſe,
And ſhe gladly wol yeve you audience:
Ther is no greſe nor no manir offence
Wherin ye fele that your herte is diſpiſed
But with her help right ſone ye ſhal be eſed.

I am right glad (quod I) ye tel me this,
But ther is non of us that knoweth the waie.
As of your way (quod ſhe) ye ſhal not mis,
Ye ſhal have one to gyde you day by day
Of my felawes, I can not bettir ſay,
Soche one as ſhal tel you the way ful right,
And Diligence this gentilwoman hight,

A woman of right famous govirnaunce,
And wel cheriſhed, I tel you in certaine,
Her felawſhip ſhal do you grete pleſaunce;
Her porte is ſoch, her manirs trewe and plaine,
She with glad chere wold do her beſy paine
To bring you there. Now farewel; I have done.
Abyde, ſaid I, ye may not go ſo ſone,

Why ſo? (quod ſhe) and I have ferre to go,
To yeve warning in many divers place
To your felawes and ſo to othir mo,
And well ye wote I have but lytil ſpace.
Now yet, (quod I) ye muſt tel me this cace,
If ye ſhal any men unto us cal.
Not one (quod ſhe) may come amonges you all.

Not one, than? ſaid I: eigh, *Benedicite!*
What have I done? I pray you tel me that.
Nowe by my lyfe I trowe but wel, (quod ſhe)
But er I can byleve there is ſomwhat,
And for to ſaye you trouthe more can I nat;
In queſtions I may nothing be to large;
I meddle muſt no furthir then my charge.

Than thus, (quod I) do me to undirſtande
What place is there this lady is dwelling?
Forſothe (quod ſhe) and one fought al this lande
Fairir is none, though it were for a king,
Deviſid wel, and that in every thing,
The touris hie ful pleſaunt ſhal ye finde,
With phanis freſh turning with every wynde;

The chambris and the parlirs of a ſorte,
With bay windowes godely as may be thought,
As for daunſing and othir wiſe diſporte
The galeries be all right well ywrought,
That wel I wote if ye were thydir brought,
And take gode hede therof in every wiſe,
Ye wol it thinke a very paradiſe.

What hight the place? (quod I) now ſay me that
Pleſaunt Regarde, (quod ſhe) to tell you plaine.
Of very trouth, (quod I) and wote ye what?
It may right wel be callid ſo certaine:
But furthirmore this wold I wit right fain,
What I ſhulde do as ſone as I come there,
And aftir whom that I may beſt enquere?

A gentilwoman portir of the yate
There ſhal ye finde, her name is Countinaunce,
If ye ſo hap ye come erly or late
Of her wer gode to have ſome acquaintaunce,
She can you tel howe ye ſhal you avaunce,
And howe to come to her ladye's preſence;
To her wordis I rede ye geve credence.

Now it is time that I ſhulde parte you fro,
For in gode faithe I have grete buſineſſe.
I wote right wel (quod I) that it is ſo,
And I thanke you of your grete gentilneſſe,
Your comforte hath yevin me hardineſſe,
That nowe I ſhal be bolde withoutin faile
To do' aftir your advice and gode counſaile.

Thus partid ſhe, and I lefte all alone;
With that I ſawe (as I behelde aſide)
A woman come, a verie godely one,
And forth withal as I had her aſpide
Me thought anone it ſhoulde be the gide,
And of her name anone I did enquere;
Ful womanly ſhe yave me this anſwere:

I am (quod ſhe) but a ſimple creture,
Sent from the courte, my name is Diligence;
As ſone as I myght come, I you enſure,
I taried not aftir I had licence:
And nowe that I am come to your preſence,
Loke, what ſervice I can you do or may
Commaundith me; I can no furthir ſay.

I thankid her, and prayed her to come nere,
Bycauſe I woulde ſe how ſhe was araide;
Her gown was blew, dreſſid in gode manere,
With her deviſe, her worde alſo, that ſaide
Tant que je puis, and I was wel apaide;
And than wiſt I, withoutin any more,
It was ful trewe that I had herde before.

Though we toke nowe before a litil ſpace
It were ful gode (quod ſhe) as I coude geſſe.
Howe farre (quod I) have we unto the place?
A daye's journey, (quod ſhe) but litil leſſe;
Wherfore I rede that now we outwarde dreſſe
For I ſuppoſe our felawſhip is paſt,
And for nothinge I wolde not we were the' laſt.

Then departid we' at ſpringing of the daye,
And forthe we wente a ſofte and eſy pace,
Til at the laſt we were on our journey
So far outwarde that we might ſe the place;
Nowe let us reſt (quod I) a litil ſpace,
And ſay we as devoutly as we can
A *Pater noſter* for Saint Julian.

With all my herte; I aſſent with gode wil;
Moch bettir ſhal we ſpede whan we have done.
Than taried we and ſaid it every dyl;
And whan the day was paſt farre aftir none
We ſawe a place, and thidir came we ſone,
Whiche rounde aboute was cloſid with a wal,
Semınge to me full like an hoſpitall.

There found I one had brought all min aray,
(A gentil woman of mine acquaintaunce)
I have mervaile (quod I) what manir way
Ye had knowlege of al this ordinaunce.
Yes, yes, (quod ſhe) I herde Perſeveraunce
Howe ſhe warnid her ſelawes everichone,
And what aray ye ſhouldin have upon.

Nowe for my love (quod I) this I you praye,
Sith ye have take upon you all the paine,
That ye wolde helpe me on with mine araye,
For wit ye wel I wolde be gone right faine.
Al this prayir us nedith not certaine,
(Quod ſhe againe;) come of, and hye you ſone;
And ye ſhal ſe anone it ſhall be done.

But this I doute me gretly, wote ye what?
That my ſelawes be paſſid by and gone.
I warne you (quod ſhe) that are they nat,
For here they ſhall aſſemble everichone,
Notwithſtandinge I counſaile you anone
Make you redy, and tary you no more,
It is no harme though ye be there before.

So than I dreſſid me in mine araye,
And aſked her whethir it were wel or no?
It is right well (quod ſhe) unto my pay,
Ye nede not care to what place er ye go:
And whilies that ſhe and I debatid ſo
Came Diligence and ſawe me al in blewe;
Siſtir, (quod ſhe) right wel broke ye your newe!

Diſcrecion Purveiour.

Than wente we forth and met an avinture
A yonge woman, an officir ſeminge;
What is your name? (quod I) tell, gode creture.
Diſcrecion, (quod ſhe) without leſinge.
And where (quod I) is your moſt abidinge?
I have (quod ſhe) this office of purchace,
Chefe Purveyour that longith to this place.

Acquayntaunce Herbyger.

Fair love! (quod I) in all your ordinaunce
What is her name that is the herbigere?
Forſothe (quod ſhe) her name is Acquaintaunce,
A woman of right gracious manere.
Then thus, (quod I) what ſtraungirs have ye here?
But fewe (quod ſhe) of high degre ne lowe,
Ye be the firſt, as ferforth as I knowe.

Countinaunce Porter.

Thus with talis we came ſtreight to the yate,
This yonge woman departid was and gone,
Came Diligence, and knockid faſt thereat,
Who is without? (quod Countinaunce anone.)
Truly, (quod I) fayre ſiſtir, here is one.
Which one? (quod ſhe) and therewithal ſhe lough.
I Diligence; ye knowe me wel ynoughe.

Than opened ſhe the gate, and in we go;
With wordis faire ſhe ſaide full gentilly,
Ye are welcome ywis; are ye no mo?
Nat one (quod ſhe) ſave this woman and I.
Now than (quod ſhe) I pray you hertily
Takith my chaumbre for a while to reſt
Til your ſelawis come; I holde it beſt.

I thanked her, and forth we go everichone
Til her chambre withoutin wordis mo,
Came Diligence and toke her leve anone.
Where er ye lyſt (quod I) nowe may ye go,
And I thanke you right hertily alſo
Of your labour, for whiche God do you mede;
I can no more, but Jeſu be your ſpede!

Than Countinaunce thus aſkid me anone,
Your felauſhip where be they all? (quod ſhe.)
For ſothe (quod I) they' are cominge everichone,
But where they are I knowe no certainte,
Without I may 'hem at his windowe ſe;
Here wil I ſtande a waitinge here amonge,
For wel I wote they wil not hence be longe.

Thus as I ſtode muſing ful buſily,
I thought to take gode hede of her aray;
Her gowne was blewe, this wote I verily,
Of gode facyon, and furrid wel with gray,
Upon her ſleve her worde, this is no nay,
Whiche ſaid thus, as my penne can endite,
A moy, qui voy, writin with lettirs white.

Then forth withal ſhe came ſtreight unto me,
Your wordes (quod ſhe) fain wold I that I knewe.
Forſothe (quod I) ye ſhal wel knowe and ſe,
And for my worde I have none, this is trew;
It is ynough that my clothing be blewe,
As here before I had commaundement,
And ſo to do I am right well content.

Largeſſe Stewarde.

But tell me this I pray you hertilye,
The ſteward here, ſay me what is her name?
She hight Largeſſe, I ſay you ſurily,
A faire lady, and of right noble fame,

Whan ye her ſe ye wil reporte the ſame,
And undir her to byd you welcome al
There is Belchier, marſhal of the hal.
Now al this while that ye here tary ſtill
Your own matirs ye may wel have in mind;
But tel me this, have ye brought any bill?
Ye, ye, (quod I) and els I were behinde;
Where is there one, tel me, that I may finde
To whom that I may ſhewe my matirs plaine?
Surely (quod ſhe) unto the chambirlaine.

Remembraunce Chambirlaine.

The chambirlaine, (quod I) and ſay ye trewe?
Ye, verily, (ſaid ſhe;) by myne adviſe
Ben nat aferde; unto her lowlye ſewe.
It ſhal be done (quod I) as ye devyſe,
But I muſt knowe her name in any wiſe.
Trewly (quod ſhe) to ſhewe you in ſubſtaunce,
Withouten fainyng, her name is Remembraunce.
The ſecretarye may not be forget,
For ſhe dothe right moche in every thinge,
Wherfore I rede when ye have with her mete
Your matere whole tel her without faininge;
Ye ſhal her ſynde ful gode and ful lovinge.
Tel me her name (quod I), of gentilneſſe.
By my gode ſothe (quod ſhe) Aviſeneſſe.
That name (quod I) for her is paſſing gode,
For every byl and ſchedule ſhe muſt ſe.
Nowe gode, (quod I) come ſtande there as I ſtode,
My felawes be cominge; yondir they be.
Is it in jape, or ſay ye ſothe? (quod ſhe)
In jape! nay, nay, I ſay you for certayne;
Se how thei come togithir twain and twaine.
Ye ſay ful ſothe, (quod ſhe) that is no nay,
I ſe coming a godely company.
They ben ſoch folke, (quod I) dare I to ſay,
That lyſt to love, thinkith it verily,
And for my love I pray you faythfully
At any tyme whan they upon you call
That ye woll be gode frende unto 'hem all.
Of my frendſhip (quod ſhe) they ſhal not miſſe,
And for their eſe to put therto my paine.
God yelde it you! (quod I) but take you this,
Howe ſhal we know who is the chambirlayne?
That ſhal ye wel know by her word certaine.
What is her worde, ſyſtir? I pray you ſay.
Plus ne purroye, thus writith ſhe alwaye.
Thus as we ſtole togydir ſhe and I,
Even at the yate my felawes were echone,
So met I 'hem (as me thought was godely)
And bade 'hem welcome al by one and one;
Then came forth Countinaunce to us anone,
Ful hertily, Fair ſiſtirs al, (quod ſhe)
Ye be right welcome into this countre.
I counſayle you to take a litil reſt
In my chambre, if it be your pleſaunce;
Whan ye be there me thinke it for the beſt
That I go in and cal Perſeveraunce,
Bycauſe ſhe is one of your acquaintaunce,
And ſhe alſo wil tel you every thinge
Howe ye ſhal be rulir of your cominge.
My felawes al and I, by one adviſe,
Were wel agreed to do lyke as ſhe ſayde;
Than we began to dreſſe us in our giſe,
That folke ſhoulde ſay we were not unpurveide,
And gode wagirs among us there we laide
Which of us was atirid moſte godeleſt,
And of us al whiche ſhulde be praiſid beſt.
The portir came and brought Perſeveraunce,
She welcomid us in curteis manere;
Thinke not long (quod ſhe) of your attendance,
I wil go ſpeke unto the herbigere,
That ſhe may purvey for your lodging here,
Than wil I go unto the chambirlaine
To ſpeke for you, and come anone againe.
And whan that ſhe departid was and gone,
We ſawe folkis coming without the wal,
So gret peple, that nombre coude we none,
Ladies they were, and gentil women al,
Clothid in blewe, echone her worde withal,
But for to knowe her worde or her deviſe
They came ſo thicke I ne might in no wiſe.
With that anone came in Perſeveraunce,
And where I ſtode ſhe came ſtreight unto me;
Ye ben (quod ſhe) of min olde acquaintaunce,
You to enquere the boldir wolde I be
What worde they bere eche aſtir her degre;
I you pray tel it me in ſecret wiſe,
And I ſhall kepe it cloſe on warrantiſe.
We ben five ladies (quod I) al in fere,
And gentil women four in company,
When they begin to opin ther matere
Than ſhal ye knowe ther wordis by and by;
But as for me I have none verily,
And ſo I tolde Countinaunce here before;
Al min aray is blewe, what nedith more?
Nowe then (quod ſhe) I wol go backe againe
That ye may have knowlege what ye ſhuld do.
In ſoth (quod I) if ye wolde take the paine,
Ye dyd right moche for us if ye dyd ſo,
The rathir ſpede the ſonir may we go;
Grete coſte alway there is in taryinge,
And longe to ſewe it is a wery thinge.
Then partid ſhe and came againe anone;
Ye muſt (quod ſhe) come to the chambirlaine.
We be nowe redy (quod I) everychone
To folowe you whan er ye liſt certaine;
We have none eloquence, to tel you plaine,
Beſeching you we may be ſo excuſed
Our trewe meaning that it be not refuſed.
Then went we forth aſtir Perſeveraunce;
To ſe the prees it was a wondir cace,
There for to paſſe it was a grete combraunce,
The peple ſtode ſo thicke in every place:
Nowe ſtande ye ſtil (quod ſhe) a litil ſpace,
And for your eſe ſomwhat I ſhal aſſay
Yf I can make you any bettir way.
And forth ſhe gothe among 'hem everychon,
Making a way that we might thorough paſſe
More at our eſe, and whan ſhe had ſo done
She beckende us to come where as ſhe was,
So aftir her we folowed more and las;
She brought us ſtreight unto the chambirlayne,
There leſte ſhe us, and than ſhe went againe.
We ſalued her, as reſon woulde it ſo,
Ful humble beſeching her gret godeneſſe
In our mattirs that we had for to do
That ſhe wolde be gode lady and maiſtreſſe.
Ye be welcome, (quod ſhe) in ſothfaſteneſſe,
And ſe, what I can do you for to pleſe
I am redy, that may be to your eſe.

We folowed her unto the chambir dore;
Sistirs, (quod she) come ye in aftir me:
But wete ye wel there was a pavid flore
The godlyist that any wight might se;
And furthirmore about than lokid we
On eche cornir and upon every wal,
Whiche was ymade of burel and crystal.

Wherein was graven of stories many one
Firste how Phyllis, of womanly pite,
Dyed pitcously for love of Demophone,
Next aftir was the story of Thisbe,
Howe that she slewe her selfe undir a tre;
Yet sawe I more, howe in right pitous cass
For Antony was slaine Cleopatras;

Upon the othir side was Hawes the scene,
Ful entrewly disscvid in her baine;
There was also Annelida the Quene,
Upon Arcite howe sore she did complaine!
Al these stories were gravid there certaine,
And many mo than I reherse you here;
It were to longe to tel you al in fere.

And bicause that the wallis shone so bright
With fine imple they were al ovir sprad,
To the entent folke shulde not hurte ther sight,
And thorough it the stories might be radde;
Than furthirmore I went as I was lad,
And there I sawe withoutin any faile
A chaire yset with ful riche aparaile;

And five stagis it was set fro the grounde,
Of cassidony ful curiously wrought,
With foure pomelles of golde, and very rounde,
Set with saphirs as gode as coude be thought,
That wot ye what? if it wer thorough sought
As I suppose fro this countre to Inde
Anothir soche it were right harde to finde:

For wete ye wel I was right nere to that,
So as I durst, beholding by and by,
Above there was a riche clothe of estate
Ywrought with the nedle ful straungely,
Her worde thereon, and thus it said truely,
En Dieu est, to tel you in wordis fewe,
With grete letters, the betrir I 'hem knewe.

Thus as we stode a dore opened anone,
A gentilwoman semely of stature,
Bering a mace, came out her selfe alone,
Sothely me thought her a godely creture;
She spake nothinge to lowde, I you ensure,
Nor hastily, but with godely warninge
Make rome, (quod she) my lady is cominge.

With that anone I sawe Perseveraunce
Howe she helde up the tapet in her hande,
I sawe also in godely ordinaunce
This gret lady within the tapet stande,
Comyng outwarde I wol ye undirstande,
And aftir her a noble company,
I coude not tel the nombre sikirly.

Of ther namis I wolde nothing enquere,
Furthir than soche as we wolde sewe unto,
Save a lady whiche was the chauncellere,
Attemperaunce, sothely her name was so,
For us nedith with her have moche to do
In our mattirs, and alway more and more;
And so forthe to tellin you furthirmore

Of this lady, her beaute to discrive
My conninge is to simple verily,
For nevir yet the dayis of my live
So inly faire I have sone none trewly,
In her estate assurid uttirly;
There wantid nought, I dare you well assure,
That longid to a most godely creture.

And furthirmore, to speke of her arape,
I shal tel you the manir of her gowne;
Of clothe of golde ful riche, it is no nay,
The colour blewe, of right godely facyoun,
In taberde wise, the sleves hanging adown,
And what purfil there was, and in what wise,
So as I can I shal it you devise:

Aftir a forte the collir and the vente,
Lyke as arming is made in purfilinge,
With grete perlis ful fine and orient,
They were couchid all aftir one worching,
With diamondes in stede of pawdiring,
The slevis and the purfill of a sise,
They were made alike in every wise.

Aboute her necke a sorte of faire rubyes,
In white flouris of right fine enamaile,
Upon her hed set in the faireste wise
A circle of grete balais of entaile,
That in erneste, to speke withoutin faile,
For yonge and olde and every manir age
It was a worlde to loken on her visage.

Thus coming forth to sit in her estate,
In her presence we kneled down everychone,
Presenting our byllis; and wote ye what?
Ful humbly she toke 'hem by one and one:
Whan we had done than came they al anone
And did the same eche aftir her manere,
Kneling at ones and rising al in fere.

Whan this was don, and she set in her place,
The chambirlaine she did unto her cal,
And she godely coming to her apace,
Of her entent knowing nothing at al,
Voyde backe the prese (quod she) up to the wall,
Make large rome, but loke that ye do not tary,
And take these byllis to the secretary.

The chambirlaine did her commaundément,
And came againe as she was byd to do,
The secretary there beyng present
The byllis were delivered her also,
Not onely ours but many othin mo,
Than the lady with gode advise againe
Anone with al callid her chambirlaine.

We wol (quod she) the first thing that ye do
The secretary ye make come anone
With ther billis, and thus we wil also
In our presence she rede 'hem everychon,
That we may takin gode advise theron
Of the ladies that ben of our counsaile;
Loke this be done withoutin any faile.

Whan the chambirlaine wiste of her entent
Anone she did the secretarye call;
Let your billis (quod she) be here present,
My lady' it wil. Madame (quod she) I shal,
And in presence she wil that ye 'hem call.
With right gode wil I am redy (quod she)
At her plesure, whan she commaundith me.

And upon that was made an ordinaunce
They that came firſt ther byllis ſhulde be red,
Ful gentilly than ſaid Perſeveraunce,
Reſon it wil that they were ſoniſt ſpedde;
Anone withal, upon a tapet ſpredde,
The ſecretarye layde 'hem downe echone;
Our byllis firſt ſhe redde tho one by one.

The firſt lady bering in her deviſe
Sans que jamays, thus wrote ſhe on her byl,
Complaining ſore, and in ful pitous wiſe,
Of promiſſe made with faithful hert and wyll,
And ſo brokin ayenſt al manir ſkil,
Without deſerte alwaies on her partie,
In this matir deſiring remedye.

Her next folowing her word was in this wiſe,
Un ſans changer, and thus ſhe did complaine,
Though ſhe had be guerdoned for her ſervice
Yet nothing like as ſhe that toke the paine,
Wherfore ſhe coude in no wiſe her reſtraine,
But in this caſe ſewe until her preſence,
As reſon wolde, to havin recompence.

So furthirmore, to ſpeke of othir twaine,
One of 'hem wrote aftir her fantaſy
Onques puis lever, and for to tel you plaine,
Her complaint was ful pitous verily,
For, as ſhe ſaid, there was grete reſon why:
As I can remembre in this matere
I ſhal you tell the proceſſe al in fere.

Her byl was made complaining in her gife,
That of her joye, her comforte, and gladneſſe,
Was no ſuretie, for in no manir wiſe
She ſaid therin no point of ſtablenoſſe;
Now yl, now wele, out of al ſikirneſſe,
Ful humbly deſiring of her high grace
Sone to ſhewe her remedy in this caſe.

Her felawe made her bil, and thus ſhe ſaid,
In plaining wiſe, There as ſhe lovid beſt,
Whethir that ſhe were wrothe or weie apaide,
She might not ſe whan that ſhe wole faineſt,
And fulle wrothe ſhe was in very erneſt;
To tel her worde, as ferforth as I wote,
Entierement voſtre, right thus ſhe wrote.

And upon that ſhe made a grete requeſt
With hert and wil, and al that might be done,
As until her that might redreſſe it beſt,
For in her minde there might ſhe finde it ſone
The remedy of that whiche was her bone,
Reherſing that that ſhe had ſaide before,
Beſechinge her it might be ſo no more.

And in like wiſe as they had done before
The gentylwomen of our company
Put ther byllis; and for to tell you more,
One of 'hem wrote *C'eſt ſans dire* verily,
And her matere wholy to ſpecify
Within her byl ſhe put it in writinge,
And what it ſaid ye ſhall yhave knowinge.

It ſaid, God wote, and that ful pitouſly,
Lyke as ſhe was diſpoſid in her herte,
No misfortune that ſhe toke grevouſly,
Al one to her was the joy and the ſmerte,
Sometime no thanke for al her gode deſerte,
Othir comforte ſhe wantid none coming,
And ſo uſid it grevid her nothing;

Deſiring her and lowly beſeching,
That ſhe wolde for her ſeke a bettir way,
As ſhe that had yben her daies lyving
Stedfaſt and trewe, and wil be ſo alway:
Of her ſelawe ſomwhat I ſhal you ſay,
Whoſe byl was red the nexte forthe withal,
And what it ment reherſin you I ſhal.

En Dieu eſt ſhe wrote in her deviſe,
And thus ſhe ſaid withoutin any faile,
Her trouthe ne might be takin in no wiſe,
Like as ſhe thought, wherfor ſhe had mervaile,
For trouth ſomtyme was wont to take availe
In every mattere, but al that' is ago,
The more pyte that it is ſuffrid ſo.

Moche more there was, wherof ſhe ſhuld complain,
But ſhe thought it to gret an encombraunce
So moche to write, and therfore in certain
In God and her ſhe put all her affiaunce,
As in her worde is made a remembraunce,
Beſeching her that ſhe wolde in this cace
Shewe unto her the favour of her grace.

The thirde ſhe wrote reherſing her grevaunce,
Ye, wote ye what a pitous thing to here?
For as me thought ſhe felt grete diſpleſaunce,
One might ryght wel perceve it by her chere;
And no wondir, it ſate her paſſyng nere,
Yet lothe ſhe was to put it in writinge,
But *Nede wol havin courſe in every thinge.*

Soyes aſſuré, this was her word certain,
And thus ſhe wrote within a litil ſpace;
There ſhe lovid her labor was in vaine,
For he was ſet al in anothir place,
Ful humilly deſiring in that cace
Some gode conforte her ſorowe to appeſe,
That ſhe might livin more at hert'is eſe,

The fourth ſurely me thought ſhe likid wele,
As in her porte and in her behavinge,
And *Bien moneſte*, as ferre as I coude fele,
That was her worde, tyl her belonging,
Wherfore to her ſhe praied above al thing
Ful hertily, to ay you in ſuſtance,
That ſhe wold ſendin her gode Countinaunce.

Ye have reherſid me theſe byllis all,
But nowe let ſe ſomwhat of your entent;
It may ſo hap paravinture ye ſhal;
Nowe I pray you while I am here preſent
Ye ſhal have knowlege parde what I ment,
But thus I ſay in trouth, and make no fable,
The cace it ſelfe is inly lamentable;

And wel I wote that ye wol thynke the ſame,
Lyke as I ſay, whan ye have herde my byl;
Now gode, tel on; I hate you by Saint Jame;
Abyde a while, it is not yet my wil,
Yet muſt ye wote by reſon and by ſkil,
Sith ye' have knowlege of that was don before,
And thus it is ſaid, without wordis more:

Nothing ſo lefe as deth to come to me,
For final ende of my ſorowes and paine;
What ſhuld I more deſire as ſemith ye?
And ye knewe al aforne it for certaine
I wote ye wolde, and for to tel you plaine,
Without her helpe that hath al thinge in cure
I can nat thinke that it may long endure.

As for my trouth it hath be provid wele,
To ſay the ſothe, and I can ſay no more,
Of ful longe tyme, and ſuffrid every dele
In pacience, and kepe it all in ſtore,
Of her godeneſſe beſeching her therfore
That I might have my thanke in ſoche a wiſe
As my deſerte yſervith of juſtiſe.

Whan theſe billis were red everychone
The ladie toke a gode adviſement,
And 'hem to anſwerin by one and one
She thought it was to moche in her entent,
Wherfore ſhe yave to 'hem commaundement
In her preſence to come both one and al
To yeve 'hem her anſwere in generall.

What dyd ſhe than ſuppoſe ye verily?
She ſpake her ſelfe, and ſaid in this manere:
We have wel ſene your byllis by and by,
And ſome of 'hem be pitous for to here,
We wol therefore ye knowe al this in fere,
Within ſhorte tyme our court of parliment
Here ſhal be holde in our palays preſente,

And in al this wherin you find you greved
There ſhall ye finde an opin remedy,
In ſoche a wiſe as ye ſhal be releved
Of al that ye reherſin here thoroughly;
As for the date, ye ſhal knowe verily
That ye may have a ſpace in your coming,
For Diligence ſhal tel you by writing.

We thankid her in our moſt humble wiſe
Our ſelawſhip eche one by one aſſent,
Submittinge us lowly til her ſervice,
For as we thought we had our travaile ſpent
In ſoche wiſe as we heldin us content;
Than eche of us toke othir by the ſleve,
And forth withal as we ſhulde take our leve.

Al ſodainly the watir ſprange anone
In my viſage, and therwithal I woke:
Where am I now? thought I; al this is gone,
Al amaſid; and up I began to loke:
With that anon I went and mode this Boke,
Thus ſimpilly reherſing the ſubſtaunce,
Bicauſe it ſhulde not be' out of remembraunce.

Now verily your dreme is paſſing gode,
And worthy to be had in remembraunce,
For though I ſtand here as longe as I ſtode
It ſhulde not to me be none encombraunce,
I toke therin ſo inly grete pleſaunce;
But tel me nowe what ye the boke do cal,
For I muſte wete. Wyth right gode wyl ye ſhal.

As for this boke, to ſay you very right,
And of the name to tel you' in certainte,
L'aſſemble de Dames, thus it hight.
How thinkin ye? That name is gode parde.
Nowe go; farewel; for they cal aftir me
My felawes al, and I muſt aftir ſone:
Rede wel my dreme, for now my tale is done.

CHAUCER'S DREAME*.

Never before the year 1597 *printed: that which heretofore hath gone under the name of his Dreame, is The Book of the Ducheſſe, or The Death of Blanch, Ducheſſe of Lancaſter.*

When Flora, the quene of Pleſaunce,
Had whole achievid th' obeyſaunce
Of the freſh and the new ſeſon
Thorow out every region,
And with her mantle whole covert
That wintir made had diſcovert,
Of avinture withoutin light
In May I lay upon a night
Alone, and on my lady thought,
And how the Lord that her ywrought
Couth well entayle in imagery,
And ſhewid had grete maiſtiry,
When he in ſo litil a ſpace
Made ſuch a body and a face,
So grete beautie with ſwich fetures,
More than in othir creatures;
And in my thoughtis as I lay
Within a lodge out of the way,
Beſide a well in a foreſt,
Where aftir hunting I toke reſt,
Nature and kind ſo in me wrought
That halfe on ſlepe they me ybrought,
And gan to dreme to my thinking
With mind of knowliche like making,
For what I dremid, as me thought,
I ſaw it, and I ſleptin nought,
Wherefore is yet my full beleve
That ſome gode ſpirit that ilke eve,
By mene of ſome curious port,
Bare me where I ſaw payne and ſport;
But whether it were I woke or ſlept
Well wot I oft I lough and wept;
Wherefore I woll in remembraunce
Put whole the payne and the pleſaunce,
Which was to me axin and hele;
Would God ye wiſt it everydele,
Or at the leſt ye might o night
Of ſuch anothir have a ſight
Although it were to you a payne,
Yet on the mo'row ye would be fayne,
And wiſh that it might long endure,
Then might ye ſay ye had gode cure,
For he that dremes and wenes he ſe
Mochil the bettir yet maie he
Ywit what, and of whom, and where.
And eke the laſſe it woll hindere
To thinke I ſe this with mine eene,
Iwis this may not dremè kene,
But ſigne or a ſignifiaunce
Of haſty thing ſouning pleſaunce;
For on this wiſe upon a night,
As ye have herd, withoutin light,
Not all wakyng ne full on ſlepe,
About ſuch hour as lovirs wepe
And crie aftir ther ladies grace,
Befell me tho this wondir cace,
Which ye ſhall here, and all the wiſe,
So wholly as I can deviſe:

* This Dreame, deviſed by Chaucer, ſemeth to be a covert report of the marriage of John of Gaunt, the king's ſonne, with Blanch, the daughtir of Henry, Duke of Lancaſter, who after long love (during the time wherof the poet faineth them to be dead) were in the end by conſent of friends happily maried, figured by a bird bringing in her bill an hearbe which reſtored them to lyfe againe. Here alſo is ſhewed Chaucer's match with a certain gentlewoman, who although ſhe was a ſtranger, was notwithſtanding ſo well liked and loved of the Lady Blanch and her lord, as Chaucer himſelfe alſo was, that gladly they concluded a marriage between them. *Urry.*

In playne Engliſh evill writtin,
For ſlepe writir, well ye wittin,
Excuſid is though he do mis
More than one whiche that waking is,
Wherefore here of your gentilneſſe
I you requyre my boiſtouſneſſe
Ye lettin paſſe as thingè rude,
And herith what I woll conclude,
And of the' endityng taketh no hede,
Ne of the termes, ſo God you ſpede,
But let all paſſe as nothing were,
For thus befell, as you ſhall here.
Within an yle methought I was
Where wall and yate was all of glaſſe,
And ſo was cloſid round about
That leveleſſe none come in ne out,
Uncouth and ſtraungè to behold,
For evèry yate of fine gold
A thouſand fanis aie turning
Entunid hád, and briddes ſinging
Divers, and on eche ſane a paire
With opin mouth again the aire;
And of a ſute were all the toures,
Subtily corvin aftir floures,
Of uncouth colours during aye,
That nevir ben none ſene in May,
With many a ſmall turret hie;
But man on live could I non ſie,
Ne creturis, ſave ladies play,
Which werin ſuch of ther array
That as me thought of godelihed
They paſſeden all and womanhed,
For to behold them daunce and ſing
It ſemid like none erthly thing,
Such was ther uncouth countinaunce
In every play of right uſaunce,
And of one age everichone
They ſemid all ſave onely one,
Which had of yeris ſuffiſaunce,
For ſhe might neythir ſing ne daunce,
But yet her countenaunce was ſo glad,
And ſhe ſo fewe yeris had had
As any ladie that was there,
And as litil it did her dere
Of luſtines to laugh and tale
As ſhe had full ſtuffid a male
Of diſportis and new playis;
Faire had ſhe ben in her dayis,
And maiſtreſſe ſemid well to be
Of all that luſty companie,
And ſo ſhe might, I you enſure,
For one the conningiſt creture
She was, and ſo ſaid everichone,
That er her knew, there failid none,
For ſhe was ſober, and well aviſed,
And from every fault diſguiſed,
And nothing uſed but faith and truth;
That ſhe n'as young it was grete ruth,
For every where and in ech place
She govirnid her, that in grace
She ſtode alway with pore and riche,
That a word was none her liche,
Ne halfe ſo' able maiſtreſs to be
To ſuch a luſty cómpanie.

Befell me ſo, when I aviſed
Yhad the yle that me ſuffiſed,
And whole th' eſtate evèry where
That in the luſty yle was there,
Which was more wondir to deviſe
Than is the joyous paradiſe,
I dare well ſay, for floure ne tre,
Ne thing wherein pleſaunce might be,
There faylid none, for every wight,
Had they deſirid day and night
Richis and hele, beauty and eſe,
With every thing that them might pleſe,
But thinke and have, it coſt no more;
In ſych a country there before
Had I not ben ne herdin tell
That livis creâture might dwell.
And when I had thus all about
The yle aviſid thoroughout
The ſtate, and how they were arayed,
In my hert I wexe well appayed,
And in my ſelfe I me aſſured
That in my body' I was well ured,
Sithin I might have ſuch a grace
To ſe the ladies and the place,
Which were ſo faire, I you enſure,
That to my dome though that Nature
Would evir ſtrive and do her paine
She ſhould not con ne mow attaine
The leſt feture for to amend,
Though ſhe would all her conning ſpende,
That unto beautie might availe,
It were but paine and loſt travaile,
Such part in ther nativitie
Was then alargid of beautie;
And eke they had a thing notable
Unto ther deth ay durable,
And was, that ther beauty ſhould dure,
Which was nevir ſene in creture,
Save onily there (as I trow)
It ne hath not be wiſt ne know,
Wherefore I praiſe with ther conning
That during beautie, richè thing,
Had they ben of ther lives certaine
They had ben quite of every paine.
And when I wend thus all have ſene
The ſtate, the riches, that might bene,
That me thought impoſſible were
To ſe one thing more than was there
That to beautie or glad conning
Serve or availe might any thing,
All ſodainly as I there ſtode
This lady, that couth ſo much gode,
Unto me came with ſmiling chere,
And ſaid, *Benedicite!* this yere
Saw I nevir man here but you;
Tell me how ye come hidir now,
And your name, and where that ye dwell,
And whom ye ſeke eke mote ye tell,
And how ye come be to this place;
The ſoth well told my cauſe you grace,
And ellis ye mote priſoner be
Unto the ladies here and me,
That have the governaunce of this yle;
And with that word ſhe gan to ſmile,

And ſo did all the luſty rout
Of ladies that ſtode her about.
Madame, (quod I) this night ypaſt
Lodgid I was and ſlept faſt
In a foreſt beſide a well,
And now am here, how ſhould I tell?
Wot I not by whoſe ordinance,
But onely Fortune's purveiance,
Which puttith many, as I geſſe,
To travaile, paine, and buſineſſe,
And lettith nothing for ther truth,
But ſome ſleeth eke, and that is ruth,
Wherefore I doubt her brittilnes,
Her variance and unſtedfaſtnes,
So that I am as yet afraid,
And of my beyng here amaid,
For wondir thing it ſemith me
Thus many freſh ladies to ſe
So faire, ſo cunning, and ſo yong,
And no man dwelling them among;
N'ot I not how I hidir come,
Madame, (quod I) this all and ſome:
What ſhould I faine a long proceſſe
To you, that ſeme ſuch a princeſſe?
What pleſith you commaund or ſay,
Here I am redy to obay
To my powir, and all fulfill,
And priſonir bide at your will,
Till you duly enformid be
Of every thing ye aſke me.
This lady there right well apaid
Me by the hande ytoke, and ſaid,
Welcome, priſoner adventurus,
Right glad am I ye have ſaid thus,
And for ye doubt me to diſpleſe
I will aſſay to do you eſe:
And with that word, ye, right anon,
She and the ladies everichon
Aſſemblid, and to counſaile went,
And aftir that ſone for me ſent,
And to me ſaid on this manere,
All word for word, as ye ſhall here:
To ſe you here us thinke marvaile,
And how withoutin bote or ſaile,
By any ſubtilty or wyle,
Ye get have entre in this yle,
But not for that yet ſhall ye ſe
That we gentill women ybe,
Loth to diſpleſin any wight,
Notwithſtanding our grete right;
And for ye ſhall well undirſtond
The olde cuſtome of this lond,
Which hath continued many yere,
Ye ſhall well wete that with us here
Ye may not bide, for cauſis twaine
Which we be purpoſed you to ſaine.
The one is this; our ordinance,
Which is of long continuance,
Ne woll not, ſothly we you tell,
That no man here among us dwell,
Wherefore ye mote nedis retourne;
In no wiſe may you here ſojourne.
The othir is eke, that our quene
Out of the relme, as ye maie ſene,
Is, and may be to us a charge
If we let goe you here at large,
For whiche cauſe the more we doubt
To doe a fault while ſhe is out,
Or ſuffir that may be noyſance
Againe our old accuſtomance.
And when I had theſe cauſis twaine
Yherd, o God! what mochil paine
All ſodainly about mine hert
There came at onis, and how ſmert!
In creping ſoft as who ſhould ſtele
Or doe me robbe of all mine hele,
And made me in my thought ſo afraid
That in courage I ſtode diſmaid;
And ſtanding thus, as was my grace,
A lady came more than apace,
With a huge preiſe her about,
And told how that the quene without
Was arivid, and would come in;
Well were they that hidir might twin;
They hied ſo they would not abide
The bridiling ther horſe to ride,
By five, by ſixe, by two, by thre;
There was not one abode with me;
The quene to mete everichone
They went, and bode with me not one;
And I went aftir a ſoft paſe,
Imagining how to purchaſe
Grace of the quene there to abide
Till gode fortune ſome happy guide
Me ſendin might, that would me bring
Where I was borne, to my wonning,
For way ne fote ne knew I none,
Ne whithirward I n'iſt to gone,
For all was ſe about the yle;
No wondir though me liſt not ſmile,
Seing the caſe uncouth and ſtraunge;
And ſo in like a perilous chaunge,
Imagi'ning thus walking alone
I ſaw the ladies everichone,
So that I might ſomwhat offer,
Sone aftir that I drew me nere,
And tho I was ware of the quene,
And how the ladies on ther knene
With joyous words gladly adviſed
Her welcomed ſo that it ſuffiſed
Though ſhe the princes whole had be
Of all environed is with ſe;
And thus aviſing with chere ſad
All ſodainly I was right glad,
That gretir joy, as mote I thrive,
I trow had nevir man on live
Than I tho, ne an hert more light,
When of my lady I had ſight,
Which with the quene ycome was there,
And in one clothing both they were;
A knight alſo there well beſene
I ſaw that come was with the quene,
Of whom the ladies of that yle
Had huge wondir a long while,
Till at the laſt right ſobirly
The quene her ſelf full cunningly,
With ſofte wordis in gode wiſe,
Said to the ladies yong and wiſe,

My ſiſtirs, how it hath befall
I trow ye know it one and all
That of long time here have I bene
Within this yle biding as quene,
Living at eſe, that nevir wight
More parfit joy havin ne might,
And to you ben of govirnance
Such as you found in whole pleſance,
In every thing as ye know
Aftir our cuſtome and our low,
Which how they firſt yfoundin were
I trow ye wote all the manere;
And who the quene is of this yle,
As I have ben this longè while,
Ech ſevin yeres mote of uſage
Viſit the hevenly armitage
Which on a rock ſo high yſtonds,
In ſtrangè ſe out from all londs,
That to makin the pilgrimage
Is called a long peri'lous viage,
For if the wind be not gode frend
The journey duris to the end
Of him whiche that it undirtakes;
Of twenty thouſand one not ſcapes;
Upon which rock growith a tre
That certaine yeres beres applis thre,
Which thre applis who ſo may have
Ben from all diſpleſaunce yſave
That in the ſevin yere may fall,
This wote ye well bothe one and all,
For the firſt apple and the next
Which ygrowith unto you next
Yhath thre vertues notable;
And kepith youth aie durable,
Beauty and loke evir in one,
And is the beſt in everichone.
The ſecond apple red and grene,
Onely with lokis of your yene
You nourithis in grete pleſaunce
Bettir than partridge or feſaunce,
And fedis every liv'is wight
Pleſantly onely with the ſight.
And the third apple of the thre,
Which growith lowiſt on the tre,
Who it beris ne may not faile
That to his pleſaunce may availe,
So your pleſure and beauty rich
Your during youth evir yliche,
Your truth, your cunning, and your wele,
Hath aye flourid, and your gode hele,
Without ſicknes or diſpleſaunce,
Or thing that to you was noyſaunce;
So that you have as goddeſſes
Livid above all princeſſes:
Now is befall, as ye may ſe,
To gathir theſe ſaid applis thre,
I have not failed againe the day
Thithirwardis to take the way,
Wening to ſpede as I had oft;
But when I come I find aloft
My ſiſtir, which that here yſtands,
Having thoſe applis in her hands,
Aviſing them, and nothing ſaid,
But lokid as ſhe were well paid;
And as I ſtode her to behold,
Thinking how my joyis were cold
Sith I thoſe applis have ne might,
Evin with that ſo came this knight,
And in his armes of me aware
Me toke, and to his ſhip me bare,
And ſaid, though him I ner had ſene
Yet had I long his lady ben,
Wherefore I ſhould with him ywend,
And he would to his liv'is end
My ſervant be, and gan to ſing
As one that had wonne a rich thing:
Tho were my ſpirits fro me gone
So ſodainly everichone
That in me apperid but deth,
For I felt neithir liſe ne breth,
Ne gode ne harmè none I knewe;
The ſodaine paine me was ſo new,
That had not the haſty grace be
Of this lady, that fro the tre
Of her gentilneſſe ſo hyid
Me to comfort I had dyid,
And of her thre applis ſhe one
Into mine hand there put anone,
Which brought againe my mind and breth,
And me recovered from the deth;
Wherefore to her ſo am I hold
That for her all things do I wold,
For ſhe was lech of all my ſmert,
And from grete paine ſo quite mine hert,
And, as God wote, right as ye here
Me to comfort with frendly chere
She did her proweſſe and her might;
And truly eke ſo did this knight
In that he couth, and oftin ſaid
That of my wo he was ill paid,
And curſed the ſhip that them there brought,
The maſt, the maſtir that it wrought:
And as ech thing mote have an end,
My ſiſtir here, your brothir frend,
Con with her words ſo womanly
This knight entrete and conningly,
For mine honour and his alſo,
And ſaid that with her we ſhould go
Both in her ſhip, where ſhe was brought,
Which was ſo wondirfully wrought,
So clene, ſo rich, and ſo araid,
That we were both content and paid;
And me to comfort and to pleſe,
And mine hert for to put at eſe,
She toke grete paine in litil while,
And thus hath brought us to this yle,
As ye may ſe; wherfore echone
I pray you thanke her one and one
As hertly as ye can deviſe
Or imagine in any wiſe.
At once there tho men mightin ſeen
A world of ladies fall on kneen
'Fore my lady, that there about
Was left none ſtanding in the rout,
But altogither they went at ones
To knele; they ſpared not for the ſtones,
Ne for eſtate, ne for ther blode;
Well ſhewid there they couth much gode:

To my lady they made ſuch feſt,
And with ſuch wordis, that the left
So frendly and ſo faithfully
Yſaid was and ſo cunningly,
That wondir was, ſeing ther youth,
To here the language that they couth,
And wholly how they governed were
In thanking of my lady there,
And ſaid by will and maundément
They were at her commaundément,
Which was to me as grete a joy
As winning of the toune of Troy
Was to the hardy Grekis ſtrong
When they it wan with ſiegé long,
To ſe my lady' in ſuch a place,
And ſo receivid as ſhe was.
And when they talkid had a while
Of this and that, and of the yle,
My lady and the ladies there,
Altogithir as they ywere,
The quene her ſelf began to play,
And to the agid lady ſay,
Now ſemith you not gode it were,
Sith we be altogithir here,
To ordaine and deviſe the beſt
To ſet this knight and me at reſt,
For *Woman is a feble wight*
To rere a warre againſt a knight;
And ſith he here is in this place,
At my left in dangir or grace,
It were to me grete villany
To do him any tiranny;
But faine I would, now will ye here,
In his owne country that he were,
And I in pece and he at eſe;
This were a way us both to pleſe;
If it might be I you beſeche
With him hereof you fall in ſpeche.
This lady tho began to ſmile,
Aviſing her a litil while,
And with glad chere ſhe ſaid anone,
Madam, I will unto him gone,
And with him ſpeke, and oftin ſele
What he deſiris every dele:
And ſobirly this lady tho
Her ſelfe, and othir ladies two
She toke with her, and with ſad chere
Said to the knight on this manere;
Sir, the grete princes of this yle,
Whom for your pleſance many a mile
Ye ſought have, as I undirſtond,
Till at the laſt ye have her fond
Me ſent hath here, and ladies twaine,
To herin all thing that ye faine;
And for what cauſe ye have her ſought
Faine would ſhe wote, and whole your thought,
And why you do her all this wo,
And for what cauſe you be her ſo,
And why of every wight unware
By force ye to your ſhip her bare,
That ſhe ſo nigh ywas agone
That mind ne ſpech ne had ſhe none,
But as a painfull créature
Dying abodd her advinture,
That her to ſe indure that paine
Here we all ſay unto you plaine
Right on your ſelfe ye did amiſſe,
Seing how ſhe a princes is.
This knight, the which ycowth his gode,
Right of his truth mevid his blode,
That pale he woxe as any led,
And lok't as tho he wold be ded;
Blode was there none in nothir cheke,
Wordleſſe he was, and ſemid ſicke;
And ſo it provid well he was,
For without moving any paas,
All ſodainly as thing dying,
He fell at onis downe ſowning;
That for his wo this lady fraid
Unto the quene her hyed, and ſaid,
Cometh on anon, as have you bliſſe,
But ye be wiſe; thing is amiſſe;
This knight is ded or will be ſone,
Lo! where he lyith in a ſwone
Withoutin word or anſwiring
To that I have ſaid any thing;
Wherefore I doubt moche that the blame
Might be hindiring to your name,
Which flourid hath ſo many yere,
So longé that for nothing here
I would in no wiſe that he dyed,
Wherefore it gode were that ye hyed,
His life to ſavin at the leſt;
And aftir that his wo be ceſt
Commaundith him to voide or dwell,
For in no wiſe dare I meve mell
Of thing wherein ſuch perill is
As like is now to fall of this.
This quene right tho, full of grete fere,
With all the ladies preſent there,
Unto the knight came where he lay,
And made a lady to him ſay,
Lo! here the quene; awake, for ſhame!
What will you doe? is this gode game?
Why lye you here? what is your mind?
Now is well ſene your wit is blind,
To ſe ſo many ladies here
And ye to make none othir chere;
But as ye ſet them all at nought
Arife for his love that you bought.
But what ſhe ſaid a word not one
He ſpake, ne anſwere gave her none.
The quene of very pitty tho,
Her worſhip and his life alſo
To ſavin, there ſhe did her paine,
And quoke for fere, and gan to faine,
For woe, alas! what ſhall I doe!
What ſhall I ſay this man unto?
If he die here loſt is my name:
How ſhal I play this perillous game?
If any thing be here amiſſe
It ſhall be ſaid it rigour is,
Whereby my name impayrin might;
And like to die eke is this knight:
And with that word her hand ſhe laid
Upon his breſt, and to him ſaid,
Awake, my knight! lo! it am I
That to you ſpeke: now tell me why

Ye fare thus, and this paine endure,
Seing you be in country ſure,
Among ſuch frends that would you hele,
Your hert'is eſe eke and your wele?
And if I wiſt what you might eſe,
Or know the thing that you might pleſe,
I you enſure it ſhould not faile
That to your hele you might availe;
Wherefore with all my hert I pray
Ye riſe, and let us talke and play:
And ſe how many ladies here
Be comin for to make gode chere!
All was for nought, for ſtill as ſtone
He lay, and word ne ſpoke he none;
Long while was or he might braid;
And of all that the quene had ſaid
He wiſt no word; but at the laſt
O mercy! twiſe he cryid faſt,
That pittie was his voice to here,
Or to behold his paineſull chere,
Which was not feined was well to ſein
Both by his viſage and his eyn,
Which on the quene at once he caſt,
And ſighid as he would to braſt,
And aftir that eke he ſhright ſo
That wondir was to ſe his wo,
For ſithin that payne was firſt named
Was net more wofull payne attained,
For with voyce did he gan to plaine,
And to himſelſe theſe wordis ſaine;
I, wofull wight full of malure,
And worſe than ded, and yet I dure,
And maugre any paine or deth
Againſt my will I ſele my breth:
Why n'am I ded, ſith I ne ſerve,
And ſith my lady will me ſterve?
Where art thou, Deth? art thou agaſt?
Well ſhall we mete yet at the laſt
Though thou the hide it is for nought,
For where thou dwelſt thou ſhalt be ſought:
Maugre thy ſubtill double face
Here will I die right in this place.
To thy diſhonour and myn eſe
Thy mannir is no wight to pleſe!
What nedis the, ſith I the ſeche,
So the to hide, my paine to eche?
And well woſt thou I will not ſive
Who would me all this world here give,
For I have with my cowardiſe
Loſt joy, and hele, and my ſerviſe,
And made my ſoveraigne lady ſo
That while ſhe lives I trow my ſo
She will be evir to her end;
Thus have I neither joy ne frend.
Wote I not whethir haſt or ſloth
Hath cauſid this now by my troth,
For at the hermitage full hie,
When I her ſaw firſt with myne eye,
I hyid till I was aloft,
And made my pace ſmall and ſoft,
Till in mine armes I had her faſt,
And to my ſhip bare at the laſt,
Wherof ſhe was diſpleſid ſo
That endles there ſemid her wo,
And I thereof had ſo grete feſe
That me repent that I come there,
Which haſt I trow gan her diſpleſe,
And is the cauſe of my diſeſe.
And with that word he gan to cry,
Now Deth, Deth, come, twyis or thry,
And motrid I n'ot what of ſlouth:
And even with that the quene of routh
Him in her armis toke, and ſayd,
Now, mine owne knight! be' not ill apayd
That I a lady to you ſent
To have knowledge of your entent,
For in gode faith I men't but well,
And would ye wiſt it every deſe,
Nor will not do to you ywis;
And with that word ſhe gan him kiſſe,
And prayed him riſe, and ſaid ſhe would
His welfare by her truth, and told
Him how ſhe was for his diſeſe
Right ſory, and faine would him pleſe,
His lyfe to ſave. Theſe wordis tho
She ſaid to him, and many mo,
In comforting, for from the paine
She would he were delivered faine.
The knight tho up ycaſt his een,
And when he ſaw it was the quene
That to him had theſe wordis ſaid,
Right in his wo he gan to braid,
And him up dreſſis for to knele,
The quene aviſing wondir wele;
But as he roſe he ovirthrew,
Wherefore the quene yet eſt anew
Him in her armis anone toke,
And pitouſly gan on him loke;
But for all that nothyng ſhe ſayd,
Ne ſpake not like ſhe were well payd;
Ne no chere made nor ſad ne light,
But all in one to every wight
There was ſene conning with eſtate
In her without noyſe or debate,
For ſave onely a loke piteous
Of womenhed undiſpiteous,
That ſhe ſhowid in continance,
Par ſemed her hert from obeiſance,
And not for that ſhe did her reine
Him to recovir from the peine,
And his hert for to put at large,
For her entent was to his barge
Him for to bryng againſt the eve,
With certeine ladies, and take leve,
And pray him of his gentilneſſe
To ſuffir her thenceforth in pece,
As othir princis had before,
And from thenceforth for evirmore
She would him worſhip in all wiſe
That gentilneſſe ymight deviſe,
And payne her wholly to fulfill
In honour his pleſure and will.
And during thus this knightis wo,
Preſent the quene and othir mo,
My lady' and many' an othir wight,
Ten thouſand ſhippis at a ſight
I ſaw come oer the wavy flode
With ſayle and ore, that as I ſtode

Them to behold I gan marvaile
From whom might come ſo many' a ſaile,
For ſith the tyme that I was bore
Such a navie there n'ere before
Had I not ſene, ne ſo arayed,
That for the ſight my hert yplayed
Aye to and fro within my breſt
For joy; long was or it would reſt;
For there was ſaylis full of floures,
Aftir caſtils with hugè toures,
Yſeming full of armis bright
That wondir luſty was the ſight,
With large toppis and maſtis long,
Richly depeint, and reare among
At certaine timis gan repayre
Smalè birdis doune from the aire,
And on the ſhippis bounds about
Yſate and ſong with voyce full out
Ballades and layes right joyouſly,
As they cowth in ther harmony,
That you to write that I there ſe
Mine excuſe is it may not be;
For why? the mattir were to long
To name the birds and write ther ſong;
Whereof anon the tydings there
Unto the quene ſone brought ywere,
With many' alas and many a doubt,
Shewing the ſhippis there without:
Tho gan the agid lady wepe,
And ſaid, Alas! our joy on ſlepe
Sone ſhal be brought, ye, long or night,
For we diſcried ben by this knight,
For certes it may none othir be
But he is of yond companie,
And they be come him here to ſeche;
And with that word her ſaylid ſpeche.
Without reme'dy we be deſtroid,
Ful oft ſaid all, and gan conclude
Wholy at onis at the laſt
That beſt was ſhit ther yatis faſt,
And arme them all in gode langage,
As they had done of old uſage,
And of fayre wordis make ther ſhot;
This was ther counſaile and the knot,
And othir purpoſe toke they none,
But armid thus forth they all gone
Toward the wallis of the yle;
But or they comin there long while
They mettin the grete lord of bove
That callid is the god of Love,
That them aviſid with ſuch chere,
Right as he with them angry were:
Avayled them not ther wals of glaſſe;
This mighty lord let not to paſſe
The ſhuttyng of ther yatis faſt;
All they had ordained was but waſt;
For when his ſhips had foundin land
This lord anon, with bow in hand,
Into this yle with hugè preſe
Yhyid faſt, and would not ceſe
Till he came there the knight ylay:
Of quene ne lady by the way
Toke he no hede, but forth he paſt,
And yet all followed at the laſt.

And when he came where lay the knight
Well ſhewid he he had grete might,
And forth the quene callid anone
And all the ladies everichone,
And to them ſaid, Is not this routh,
To ſe my ſervaunt for his trouth
Thus lene, thus ſicke, and in this payne,
And wot not unto whom to playne,
Save onely one withoutin me,
Which might him hele, and is his fo?
And with that word his hevy brow
He ſhewid the quene, and lokid row,
This mighty lord forth tho anone
With o loke her faultis echone
He can her ſhew in litil ſpech,
Commaunding hem to be his lech.
Withoutin more, ſhortly to ſay,
He thought the quene ſone ſhould obay,
And in his hond he ſhoke his bow,
And ſaid right ſone he would be know;
And for ſhe had ſo long refuſed
His ſervice, and his lawes not uſed,
He let her wit that he was wroth,
And bent his bow, and forth he goth
A pace or two, and evin there
A largè draught up to his ere
He drew, and with an arrow ground
Both ſharpe and newe the quene a wound
He gave that perſed unto the hert,
Which aftirward full ſore gan ſmert,
And was not whole of many yere;
And even with that Be of gode chere,
My knight, quod he; I will the hele,
And the reſtore to parfite wele,
And for ech payne thou haſt endured
To have two joies thou art enured:
And forth he paſſid by the rout,
With ſobir chere walking about,
And what he ſaid I thought to here;
Well wiſt he whiche his ſervaunts were:
And as he paſſid anon he ſond
My lady', and her toke by the hond,
And made her chere as a goddes,
And of Beaute called her Princes,
Of Bounty eke gave her the name,
And ſayd there was nothyng to blame
In her, but ſhe was vertuous,
Saving ſhe would no pity uſe,
Which was the cauſe that he her ſought
To put that far out of her thought;
And ſithin ſhe had whole richeſſe
Of womanhed and frendlineſſe,
He ſaid it was nothing fitting
To void Pity his owne leggyng;
And gan her prech and with her play,
And of her beauty told her aie,
And ſaid ſhe was a creature
Of whom the name ſhould endure,
And in his bokis full of pleſaunce
Be put for er in remembraunce;
And as me thoughtin more frendly,
Unto my lady and gódelily
He ſpake than any that was there;
And for the' applis I trow it were

That ſhe had in poſſeſſion,
Wherefore long in proceſſion
Many a pace arme undir other
He welke, and ſo did with none other;
But what he would commaund or ſay
Forwith nedis all muſt obay,
And what he deſired at the leſt
Of my lady was by requeſt:
And when they long together had bene
He brought my lady to the quene,
And to her ſaid, So God you ſpede
Shew grace and conſent, that is nede.
My lady tho full conningly,
Right well aviſed and womanly,
Downe gan to knele upon the floures
Which Aprill nouriſhed had with ſhoures,
And to this mighty lord gan ſay,
That pleſith you I woll obay,
And me reſtraine from othir thought;
As ye woll al thyng ſhall be wrought:
And with that word kneling ſhe quoke.
That mighty lord in armes her toke,
And ſaid, You have a ſervaunt, one
That truir living is ther none,
Wherefore gode were, ſeing his trouth,
That on his painis ye had routh,
And purpoſe you to here his ſpech,
Fully aviſid him to lech,
For of one thyng ye may be ſure,
He will be yours while he may dure.
And with that word right on his game
Me thought he lough, and told my name,
Which was to me marvaile and fere,
That what to do I ne wiſt there,
Ne whethir was me bet or none
There to abide or thus to gone,
For well wend I my lady wold
Imagin or deme I had told
My counſaile whole, or made complaint
Unto that lord, that mighty ſaint,
So verily ech thing unſought
He ſaid as he had knowne my thought,
And told my trouth and mine uneſe
Bet than I couth have for mine eſe,
Though I had ſtudied all a weke:
Well wiſt that lord that I was ſeke,
And would be lechid wondir faine;
No man me blame, mine was the paine.
And when this lord had all yſaid,
And long while with my lady plaid,
She gan to ſmile with ſpirit glade;
This was the anſwere that ſhe made,
Which put me there in double peine,
That what to do ne what to ſeine
Wiſt I not, ne what was the beſt;
Ferre was my hert then fro his reſt,
For as I thought that ſmiling ſigne
Was tokin that the hert encline
Would to requeſtis reſonable,
Becauſe *Smiling is favorable*
To every thing that ſhall thrive,
So thoughtin I tho anon blive
That *Worldleſſe anſwere in no toun*
Was tane for obligacioun,
Ne callid ſurety in no wiſe
Amongſt them that callid ben wiſe:
Thus was I in a joyous dout,
Sure and unſuriſt of that rout:
Right as mine hert ythought it were
So more or leſſe wexin my fere,
That if one thought ymade it wele
Anothir ſhent it everydele,
Till at the laſt I couth no more,
But purpoſed as I did before
To ſerve truly my lyv'is ſpace,
Awaiting er the yere of grace,
Which may yſall yet or I ſterve,
If that it pleſe her that I ſerve,
And ſervid have, and woll do ever,
For thyng is none that me is lever
Than is her ſervice, whoſe preſence
Mine heven is whole, and her abſence
An hell all full of divers paines,
Whych to the deth full oft me ſtraines.
Thus in my thoughtis as I ſtode,
That unneth felt I harme ne gode,
I ſaw the quene a litil paas
Come where this mighty lord ywas,
And knelid downe in preſence there
Of all the ladies that there were,
With ſobir continaunce aviſed,
In few wordis that well ſuffiſed,
And to this lord anon preſent
A bill, wherein whole her entent
Was writtin, and how ſhe beſought,
As he knew every will and thought,
That of his godhed and his grace
He would forgyve all old treſpace,
And undiſpleſid be of time paſt,
For ſhe would evir be ſtedfaſt,
And in his ſervice to the deth
Uſe every thought while ſhe had breth,
And ſight and went, and ſaid no more,
Within was writtin all the fore:
At whyche bill the lord gan ſmyle,
And ſaid he would within that yle
Be lord and ſyre both eſt and weſt,
And call'd it there his new conqueſt.
And in grete councell toke the quene;
Long were the talis them betwene:
And ovir her bill he red thriſe,
And wondir gladly gan deviſe
Her ſetures faire and her viſage,
And bad gode thrift on that image,
And ſaied he trowid her compleint
Should aftir cauſe her be corſeint;
And in his ſleve he put the bill,
Was there none that yknew his will,
And forthe he walke apace about,
Beholding all the luſty rout,
Halfe in a thought with ſmiling chere,
Till at the laſt, as ye ſhall here,
He turned unto the quene ageine,
And ſaid, To morne here in this pleine
I woll that ye be and all yours,
That purpoſid ben to were flours,
Or of my luſty colour uſe,
It may not be to you excuſe,

Ne to none of yours in no wiſe,
That able be to my ſerviſe;
For as I ſaid have here before
I will be lord for evirmore
Of you, and of this yle, and all,
And of all yours that havin ſhall
Joy, pece, or eſe, or in pleſaunce
Your livis uſe without noyſaunce;
Here will I in ſtate be yſene,
And turned his viſage to the quene,
And you give knowledge of my will,
And a full anſwere of your bill.
Was there no nay, ne wordis none,
But very obeiſaunt ſemed echone;
The quene and othir that were there
Well ſemid it they had grete fere,
And there toke lodging every knight,
Was none departid of that night,
And ſome to rede old romances
Them occupied for ther pleſances,
Some to make verelaics and laies,
And ſome to othir diverſe plaies,
And I to me a romance toke,
And as I reding was the boke,
Methought the ſphere had ſo run
That it was riſing of the ſun,
And ſuch a pres into the plaine
Aſſemble gone, that with grete paine
One might for othir go ne ſtand,
Ne none take othir by the hand,
Withoutin they diſtourbid were,
So huge and gret the pres was there.
And aftir that within two houres
This mighty lord clad all in floures
Of divers colours many a paire
In his eſtate up in the aire
Well nigh twd fathom, as his hight,
He ſet him there in all ther ſight,
And for the quene and for the knight,
And for my lady and every wight,
In haſt he ſent, ſo that ner one
Was there abſent, but come echone:
And when they thus aſſemblid were,
As ye have herd me ſay you here,
Without more tarrying on hight,
There to be ſene of every wight,
Up ſtode among the pres above
A counſaylir, ſervaunt of Love,
Which ſemid well of gret eſtate,
And ſhewid there how no debate
Othir then godely might be uſed
In gentilneſſe and be excuſed,
Wherefore he ſaid his lord is will
Was every wight there ſhould be ſtill
And in pees, and of one accord,
And thus commaundld at a word,
And can his tongue to ſwiche language
To turne, that yet in all mine age
Herd I nevir ſo conningly
Man ſpeke, ne halfe ſo faithfully,
For every thing he ſaid there
Semid as it inſelid were,
Or approvid for very trew:
Swiche was his cunning language newe,
And well according to his chere,
That where I be me thinke I here
Him yet alway, when I mine one
In any place may be alone:
Firſt con he of the luſty yle
All the eſtate in lityl whyle
Reherſe, and wholly every thing
That cauſid there his lord's comming,
And every wele and every wo,
And for what cauſe eche thing was ſo
Well ſhewed he there in eſie ſpech,
And how the ſicke had nede of lech;
And that whiche whole was and in grace
He told plainly why ech thing was,
And at the laſt he con conclude,
Voidid every language rude,
And ſaid, That prince, that mighty lord,
Or his departing would accord
All the parties were there preſent,
And was the fine of his entent,
Witneſſe his preſence in your ſight,
Which ſits among you in his might;
And knelid downe withoutin more,
And not o word yſpake he more.
Tho gan this mighty lord him dreſſe,
With chere aviſed, to do largeſſe,
And ſaid unto this knight and me,
Ye ſhall to joy reſtorid be,
And for ye have ben true ye twaine
I graunt you here for every paine
A thouſand joies every weke,
And loke ye be no lengir ſeke,
And both your ladies, lo 'hem here!
Take ech his own; beth of gode chere,
Your happie day is new begun
Sith it was riſing of the ſun,
And to all othir in this place
I graunt wholly to ſtand in grace
That ſervith truely without flouth,
And to avaunced be by trouth.
Tho gan this knight and I downe knele,
Wening to doin wondir wele,
Seing, O lord! your grete mercy
Us hath enriched ſo opinly
That we deſerve may nevir more
The leſte part, but evirmore
With ſoule and body truely ſerve
You and yours till that we yſterve:
And to ther ladies there they ſtode
This knight, that *couth ſo mikil gode*,
Ywent in haſt, and I alſo;
Joyous and glad werin we tho,
And al ſo rich in every thought
As he that all hath and ought nought,
And them beſought in humble wiſe
Us to accept to ther ſervice,
And ſhew us of ther frendly cheres,
Which in ther treſure many yeres
They keptin had, us to grete paine,
And told how ther ſervauntis twaine
We were, would be, and ſo had ever,
And to the deth chaunge would we never,
Ne doe offence, ne thinke like ill,
But fill ther ordinaunce and will;

And made our othis freſhe and new,
Our old ſervice for to renew,
And wholly ther's for evirmore
We there become; what might we more?
And well awaiting that in ſlouth
We made no fault ne in our trouth,
Ne thought not do, I you enſure,
With our will, whilis we may dure.
This ſeſon paſt, againe an eve
This lord of the quene toke his leve,
And ſaid he would haſtely returne,
And at gode leiſure there ſojourne,
Both for his honour and his eſe,
Commaunding faſt the knight to pleſe,
And gave his ſtatutes in papirs,
And orderit divers officirs,
And forth to ſhip the ſame night
He went, and ſone was out of ſight.
And on the morowe when the aire
Attemprid was and wondir faire,
Erly at riſing of the ſun,
Aftir the night away was run,
Yplaying us on the rivage,
My lady ſpake of her voyage,
And ſaid ſhe wadin ſmall journies,
And held her in ſtraunge countèries,
And forthwith to the quenè went,
And ſhewed her wholly her entent,
And toke her leve with chere weping,
That pity was to ſe that parting;
For to the quene it was a paine,
As to a martyr new yſlaine,
That for her woe, and ſhe ſo tender,
Yet I wepe oft when I remember:
She offerid there to reſigne
To my lady eight times or nine
Th' aſtate, the yle, ſhortly to tell,
If it might pleſe her there to dwell,
And ſaid, for evir her linage
Should to my lady doe homage,
And hers be whole withoutin more,
Ye, and all thers for evirmore.
Nay, God forbid! my lady eſt,
With many cunning word and ſoft,
Said, that evir ſuch a thing ſhould bene
That I conſent ſhould that a quene
Of your eſtate, and ſo well named,
In any wiſe ſhould be attamed,
But would be faine with all my hert,
What ſo befell or how me ſmert,
To doin thing that you might pleſe
In any wiſe or be your eſe,
And kiſſid there and bad gode night,
For which leve wept many a wight.
There might men here my lady praiſed,
And ſuch a name of her araiſed,
What of cunning and frendlineſſe,
What of beauty with gentilneſſe,
And what of glad and frendly cheres
That ſhe uſid in all her yeres,
That wondir was here every wight
To ſay well how they did ther might,
And with a pres upon the morow
To ſhip her brought, and what a ſorow
They made when ſhe ſhould undir ſaile,
That and ye wiſt ye would mervaile.
Forth goeth the ſhip, out goeth the ſond,
And I as a wode man unbond,
For doubt to be left behind there,
Into the ſe withoutin fere
Anon I ran, till with a waw
All ſodenly I was overthraw,
And with the watir to and fro
Backward and forward travailed ſo
That mind and breth nigh was ygone,
For gode ne harme ne knew I none,
Til at the laſt with hokis tweine
Men of the ſhip with mekil peine
To ſave my life did ſuch travaile
That and ye wiſt ye would mervaile,
And in the ſhip me drewe on hie,
And ſaidin all that I would die,
And laid me long downe by the maſt,
And of ther clothis on me caſt;
And there I made my teſtament,
And wiſt my ſelfe not what I ment,
But when I ſaid had what I would,
And to the maſt my wo all told,
And tane my leve of every wight,
And cloſed mine eyen and loſt my ſight,
Aviſed to die without more ſpech,
Or any remedy to ſech
Or gracè new, as was grete nede,
My lady of my paine toke hede,
And her bethought how that for trouth
To ſe me die it were grete routh,
And to me came in ſobir wiſe,
And ſoftly ſaid, I pray you riſe;
Come on with me; let be this fare;
All ſhall be wel; have ye no care;
I will obey ye and fulfill
Wholly in al that lordis will
That you and me not long ago
Aftir his liſt commanndid ſo,
That there againe no reſiſtence
May be withoutin gret offence,
And therefore now loke what I ſay,
I am and will be frendly aye;
Riſe up, behold this avauntage,
I grauntin you in heritage
All peceably withoutin ſtrive
During the dayis of your live;
And of her applis in my ſleve
One ſhe yput, and toke her leve
In wordis few, and ſaid, God hele
He that all made you ſend, and wele!
Wherewith my pains all at ones
Tokin ſuch leve, that all my bones,
For the new durenſè pleſaunce,
So as they couth deſired to daunce,
And I as whole as any wight
Up roſe with joyous hert and light,
Whole and unſicke, right wele at eſe,
And all forget had my diſeſe,
And to my lady where ſhe plaid
I went anone, and to her ſaid;
He that all joies perſons to pleſe
Firſt ordainid with parfite eſe,

And every plesure can depart,
Send you, Madame, as large a part,
And of his godis such plenty,
As he has done you of beauty,
With hele, and all that may be thought,
He send you all as he all wrought.
Madame, (quod I) your servaunt trew
Have I ben long, and yet will new,
Withoutin chaunge or repentaunce
In any wise or variaunce,
And so will do, as thrive I ever,
For thing is none that me is sever
Than you to plese how er I fare,
Mine hert's lady and my welfare,
My life, mine hele, my lech also
Of every thing that doth me wo,
My helpe at nede, and my surete
Of every joy that longs to me,
My succours whole in allè wise
That may be thought or man devise,
Your grace, Madame, such have I found,
Now in my nede, that I am bound
To you for er, so Christ me save,
For hele and live of you I have,
Wherefore is resoun I you serve
With due obeisaunce till I sterve,
And ded and quicke be evir yours,
Late, erly, and at allè hours.
Tho came my lady small alite,
And in plaine Englisch con consite,
In wordis few whole her entent
She shewed me there, and how she ment
To me ward in every wise,
Wholly she came at ther devise,
Without processe or long travell,
Charging me to kepin counsell,
As I would to her grace attaine,
Of which commaundement I was faine;
Wherefore I passe oer at this time,
For counsell cords not well in rime,
And eke the oth that I have swore
To breke me were bettir unbore;
Why? for untrue for evirmore
I should be hold, that nevirmore
Of me in place should be report
Thing that availe might, or comfort
To mewardis in any wise,
And eche wight wouldin me dispise
In that they couth, and me repreve,
Which were a thing sore for to greve,
Wherefore hereof more mencion
Make I not now ne long sermon,
But shortly thus I me excuse,
To rime a counsell I refuse.
Sailing thus two dayis or thre
My lady towards her countre,
Ovir the wavis high and grene,
Which were in large and depe betwene,
Upon a time me called and said,
That of my hele she was well paid,
And of the quene and of the yle
She talkid with me a long while,
And of all that she there had sene,
And of th' estate and of the quene,
And of the ladies name by name,
Two houres or mo this was her game,
Till at the last the wind can rise,
And blew so fast and in such wise
The ship, that every wight can say
Madame, er eve be of this day,
And God tofore, ye shall be there
As ye would fainist that ye were,
And doubtith not within fire hours
Ye shall be there as all is yours:
At which wordis she gan to smile,
And said that was no longè while
That they her set; and up she rose,
And all about the ship she gose,
And made gode chere to every wight,
Till of the land she had a sight,
Of whichè sight glad, God it wot,
She was abashid and abote,
And forth goeth, shortly you to tell,
Where she accustomed was to dwell,
And recevid was, as gode right,
With joyous chere and hert's light,
And as a glad new avinture
Plesaunt to evèry creture;
With which landing tho I awoke,
And found my chambir full of smoke,
My chekis eke unto the eres,
And all my body, wet with teres,
And all so feble and in such wise
I was, that unneth might I rise,
So far travailid and so faint,
That neithir knew I kirke ne saint,
Ne what was what ne who was who,
Ne avised what way I would go;
But by an adventurous grace
I rise and walkt, sought pace and pace,
Till I a winding staire yfound,
And held the vice aye in my hond,
And upward softly so can crepe
Till I came where I thought to slepe
More at mine ese, and out of prece,
At my gode leisure and in pece,
Till somwhat I recomfort were
Of the travill and the grete fere
That I endurid had before,
This was my thought withoutin more;
And as a wight witlesse and faint,
Without more in a chambir paint
Full of stories old and divers,
More than I can as now reherse,
Unto a bed full sobirly,
So as I mightin, full southly,
Pace aftir other, and nothing said,
Till at the last downe I me laid,
And as my mind would give me leve
All that I dremid had that eve
Before that all I can reherse,
Right as a child at schole his verse
Doth aftir that he thinketh to thrive,
Right so did I for all my live,
I thought to have in remembraunce
Both the paine and eke the plesaunce,
The Dreme whole as it me befell,
Which was as ye herin me tell;

Thus in my thoughtis as I lay
That happy or unhappy day,
Ne wot I not, ſo have I blame,
Of the two which ſhulde be the name,
Befell me ſo that there a thought
By proceſſe new on ſlepe me brought,
And me governed ſo in a while
That ones againe within the yle
Me thought I was, where of the knight
And of the ladies I had ſight,
And were aſſemblid on a grene,
Bothe knight and lady with the quene,
At which aſſembly there was ſaid
How that they all content and paid
Werin wholly as in that thing
That the knight there ſhould be the king,
And they would all for ſure witneſſe
Yweddid be both more and leſſe,
In remembraunce, withoutin more,
Thus they conſent for evirmore,
And was concludid that the knight
Departin ſhould the ſame night,
And forthwith there toke his voiage
To journey for his marriage,
And returnin with ſuch an hoſt
That weddid might be left and moſt:
This was concluded, written and ſeled,
That it ne might not be repeled
In no wiſe, but continue firme,
And all ſhould be within a terme,
Without more excuſation,
Both feſt and coronation,
This knight, which had thereof the charge,
Anon into a little barge
Ybrought was late againſt an eve,
Where of all he ytoke his leve,
Which barge was as a man'is thought
Aftir his pleſure to him brought,
The quene her ſelfe accuſtomed aye
In the ſame barge oft for to play,
It nedith neithir maſt ne rothir,
I have not herd of ſuch another,
No maiſtir for the govirnaunce,
He ſaylid by thought and pleſaunce,
Withoutin labour eſt and weſt,
All ywas one calme or tempeſt,
And I went with at his requeſt,
And was the firſt praied to the feſt.
When he came into his countre,
And paſſid had the wavy ſe,
In an havin bothe depe and large
He left his rich and noble barge,
And to the court, ſhortly to tell,
He went where he was wont to dwell,
And was recevid, as gode right,
As heire, and for a worthy knight,
With all the ſtatis of the lond,
Which came anon at his firſt ſond,
With glad ſpiritis full of trouth,
Loth to do fault, or with a ſlouth
Attaint to be in any wiſe,
Ther richis was ther old ſerviſe,
Which evir trew had ben yfond
Sith firſt inhabit was the lond;
And ſo recevid thei ther king
That forgottin ywas no thing
That ought to be done ne might pleſe,
Ne ther ſoveraine lord do eſe;
And with them ſo, ſhortly to ſay,
As they of cuſtome had done aye,
For ſevin yere paſt was and more,
The father, the old, wiſe, and hore,
King of the land, ytoke his leve
Of all his barons on an eve,
And told them how his dayis paſt
Were all, and comin was the laſt,
And hart'ily prayed 'hem to remember
His ſonnè, which yong was and tender,
That borne ywas ther prince to be,
If he returne to that countre
Might by adventure or by grace
Within any ſhorte time or ſpace,
And to be true and frendly aye,
As they to him had ben alway:
Thus he them prayd withoutin more;
And toke his leve for evirmore.
Knowin was how tendir in age
This yongè prince a grete viage
Uncouth and ſtraunge, honours to ſeche,
Ytoke in hond with lityl ſpeche,
Which was to ſekin a princes
That he deſired more than riches,
For her grete name that flourid ſo
That in that time there was no mo
Of her eſtate, ne ſo well named,
For borne was none that er her blamed,
Of which princes ſomwhat before
Here have I ſpoke, and ſome will more.
So thus befell as ye ſhall here;
Unto ther lord they made ſuch chere
That joy was there to be preſent
To ſe ther troth and how they ment;
So very glad they were ech one
That them among there was no one
Whiche that deſirid more riches
Than for ther lord ſuch a princes
That they might pleſe, and that were faire,
For faſt deſirid they an heire,
And ſaid grete ſurety were ywis.
And as they were ſpekin of this
The prince himſelfin him aviſed,
And in plaine Engliſh undiſguiſed
Them ſhewid wholy his journey,
And of ther counſell can them prey,
And told how he enſurid was,
And how his day he might not paſſe
Withoutin diffame and grete blame,
And to him for evir a ſhame;
And of ther counſell and aviſe
There he prayith them once or twiſe,
And that they would within ten daies
Aviſe and ordaine him ſuch waies,
So that it were no diſpleſaunce,
Ne to this relme oer grete greivaunce,
And that he might have to his feſt
Sixty thouſand geſtes at the leſt,
For his intent within ſhort while
Was to returne unto this yle

That he came fro, and kepe his day;
For nothing would he be away.
To counſaile tho the lords anon
Into a chambir everychone
Togithir went, them to deviſe
How they might beſt and in what wiſe
Purvey for their iord'is pleſaunce,
And the relm'is continaance
Of honor, which in it before
Had continuid evirmore:
So at the laſt they found the waies,
How that within the next ten daies
All might with paine and diligence
Be done, and caſt what the diſpence
Might draw, and, in concluſion,
Made for ech thing proviſion.
When this was done, wholly tofore
The prince the lordis all before
Come, and ſhewid what they had done,
And how they couth by no reſon
Findin that within the ten daies
He might departin by no waies,
But would be fiftene at the leſt
Or he returne might to his feſt:
And ſhewed him every reſon why
It might not be ſo haſtily
As he deſirid, ne his day
He might not kepè by no way,
For divers cauſis wondir grete;
Which when he herd in ſuch an hete
He fell for ſorow, and was ſeke,
Still in his bed wholè that weke,
And nigh the tothir for the ſhame,
And for the doubt and for the blame
That mightin on him be aret,
And oft upon his breſt he bet,
And ſaid, Alas! mine honour for aye
Have I here loſt clenely this day;
Ded would I be; alas! my name
Shall aye be more henceforth in ſhame,
And I diſhonoured and repreved,
And nevir more ſhall be beleved:
And made ſwich ſorow, that in trouth
Him to behold it was grete routh;
And ſo endured the dayes fiftene,
Till that the lords on an even
Him come and told they redy were,
And ſhewid in few wordis there
How and what wiſe they had purvey'd
For his eſtate, and to him ſaid
That twenty thouſand knights of name,
And fourty thouſand without blame,
All come of noble ligine,
Togidir in a compane,
Were lodgid on a river's ſide,
Him and his pleſure there t'abide.
The prince tho for joy up aroſe,
And where they lodgid were he goes
Withoutin more that ſamè night,
And theſe his ſuppir made to dight,
And with them bode till it was dey,
And forthwith to take his journey,
Leving the ſtreight, holding the large,
Till he came to his noble barge;
And when this prince, this luſtie knight,
With his peple in armis bright
Was comin where he thought to paſs,
And knew well none abiding was
Behind, but all were there preſent,
Forthwith anon all his intent
He told them there, and made his cries
Thorough his hoſtè that day twiſe,
Commaunding every livis wight
There being preſent in his ſight
To be the' morow on the rivage,
Where he begin would his viage.
The morow come, the cry was kept,
But few was there that night that ſlept,
But truſſed and purveid for the morow,
For fault of ſhips was all ther ſorrow,
For ſave the barge and othir two
Of ſhippis ther ſaw I no mo:
Thus in ther doubtis as they ſtode,
Waxing the ſe, comming the flode,
Was cried, To ſhip goe every wight,
Then was but hie that hie him might;
And to the barge me thought echone
They went, without was left not one,
Ne horſe ne male, truſſe ne baggage,
Salad ne ſpere, gardbrace ne page,
But was lodgid, and rome ynough;
At which ſhipping me thought I lough,
And gan to marvaile in my thought
How evir ſuch a ſhip was wrought,
For what peple that can encreſe,
Ne ner ſo thicke might be the preſe,
But all had romè at ther will,
There was not one was lodgid ill;
For as I trowe my ſelfe the laſt
Was one, and lodgid by the maſt,
And where I loked I ſaw ſuch rome
As all were lodgid in a towne.
Forth goth the ſhip, ſaid was the crede,
And on ther knees for ther gode ſpede
Downe knelid every wight a while,
And prayid faſt that to the yle
They mightin comin in ſafety,
The prince and all the company,
With worſhip and withoutin blame,
Of diſclaundir of his gode name,
Of the promiſe he ſhould retourne,
Within the time he did ſojourne,
In his londè biding his hoſt,
This was ther prayir left and moſt:
To kepe the day it might not ben
That he' appointid had with the quene
To returnin withoutin flouth,
And ſo aſſurid had his trouth,
For which default this prince, this knight,
During the time ſlept not a night,
Such was his wo and his diſeſe,
For doubt he ſhould the quene diſpleſe.
Forth goith the ſhip with ſuch ſpede
Right as the prince for his grete nede
Deſirin would after his thought,
Till it unto the yle him brought,
Where all in haſt upon the ſand
He and his peple toke the land

With hertis glad and chere light,
Wening to be in heven that night;
But or they paſſid had a while,
Entring in towardis that yle,
All clad in blacke, with chere piteous,
A lady which ner diſpiteous
Had be in all her life tofore
With ſory chere and hert to tore
Unto this prince where he gan ride
Ycome and ſaid, Abide, abide,
And have no haſt, but faſt retourne,
No reſon is ye here ſojourne,
For your untruth hath us diſcried;
Wo worth the time we us allied
With you, that are ſo ſone untrew;
Alas the day that we you knew!
Alas the time that ye were bore!
For all this lond by you is lore;
Accurſed be he you hidir brought!
For all our joy is turnd to nought;
Your acquaintance we may complaine,
Which is the cauſe of all our paine.
Alas! Madame, quod tho this knight,
And with that from his horſe he light,
With colour pale and chekis lene,
Alas! what is this for to mene?
What have ye ſaid? why be ye wroth?
You to diſpleſe I would be loth:
Knowe ye not full well the promeſſe
Which I made have to your princeſſe,
Which to perfourme is mine intent,
So mote I ſpede as I have ment,
And as I am her very trew,
Withoutin change or thoughtis new,
And al ſo fully her ſervand
As creäture or man livand
May be to lady or princeſſe,
For ſhe mine heven and whole richeſſe
Is, and the lady of mine hele,
My worldis joy and all my wele.
What may this be, whence coms this ſpech?
Tell me, Madame, I you beſech,
For ſith the firſt of my living
Was I ſo ſerefull of nothing
As I am now to here you ſpeke,
For doubt I ſele mine hert to breke:
Say on, Madame, tell me your will;
The remnaunt is it gode or ill?
Alas (quod ſhe) that ye were bore!
For for your love this land is lore;
The quene is ded, and that is ruth,
For ſorow of your gret untruth:
Of two partes of the luſty rout
Of ladies that were there about,
That wont werin to talk and play,
Now are thei ded and clene away,
And undir earth tane lodging newe;
Alas that er ye were untrew!
For when the time ye ſet was paſt
The quene toke counſaile ſone in haſt
What was to doe, and ſaid Grete blame
Your acquaintaunce cauſe would and ſhame,
And the ladies of ther aviſe
Prayid, for nede was to be wiſe,
In eſchewing talis and ſonge,
That by them makin would ill tonge,
And ſey they were lightly conqueſt,
And prayid to a poré feſt,
And fouly had ther worſhip weved,
When ſo unwiſely they conceived
Ther richè treſour and ther hele,
Ther famous name and ther wele
To put in ſuch an avinture,
Of which the ſclaundir eveir dure
Was like, without helpe of appele,
Wherefore they nede had of counſele,
For every wight of them would ſay,
Ther cloſid yle an opin way
Was become to every wight,
And well apprevid by a knight,
Which he, alas! without payſaunce
Had ſone achevid th' obeiſance:
All this was moved at counſell thriſe,
And was concludid daily twiſe,
That bet was die withoutin blame
Than loſe the riches of ther name;
Wherefore the deth'is acquaintance
They cheſe, and left have ther pleſaunce,
For doubt to livin as repreved,
In that they you ſo ſone beleved,
And made ther othes with one accord,
That ete ne drinke, ne ſpeke o word,
They ſhould nevir, but er weping
Bide in a place without parting,
And uſe ther dayis in penaunce,
Without deſire of allegeaunce,
Of which the truth anon con preve;
For why? the quene forthwith her leve
Toke at them all that were preſent,
Of her defauts fully repent.
And dyid there withoutin more,
Thus are we loſt for evirmore;
What ſhould I more hereof reherſe?
Comin within, come ſe her herſe
Where ye ſhall ſe the piteous ſight
That er yet was ſhewin to knight,
For ye ſhall ſein ladies ſtond
Ech with a grete rod in her hond,
Yclad in black with viſage white,
Redy ech othir for to ſmite;
If any be that will not wepe,
Or who that makes counte'nance to ſlepe,
They be ſo bet, that all ſo blew
They be as cloth that died is new,
Such is ther parfite repentance,
And thus they kepe ther ordinance,
And will do evir to the deth,
While them enduris any breth.
This knight tho in his armis twaine
This lady toke, and gan her ſaine,
Alas my birth! wo worth my life!
And even with that he drew a knife,
And thorough gown, doublet, and ſhert,
He made the blode come from his hert,
And ſet him doune upon the grene,
And full repent clofid his ene,
And ſave that ones he drew his breth
Without more thus he toke his deth;

For whiche cauſe the luſty hoſt,
Which in a battaile on the coſt
At once for ſorrow ſuch a cry
Gan rere throw the company,
That to the heven herd was the ſowne,
And undir th'erth als fer adowne,
That wilde beſtis for the fere
So ſodainly afrayid were,
That for the doubt while they might dure
They ran, as of their lives unſure
From the wodis unto the plaine,
And from valleys the high mountaine
They ſought, and ran as beſtis blind
That clene forgottin had ther kind.
This wo not ceſed, to counſaile went
Theſe lordis, and for that lady ſent,
And of aviſe what was to done
They her beſought ſhe ſay would ſone.
Weping full ſore, all clad in blake,
This lady ſoftly to them ſpake,
And ſaid, My Lordis, by my trouth
This miſchefe it is of your ſlouth,
And if ye had that judge would right
A prince that were a very knight,
Ye that ben of eſtate echone
Die for his fault ſhould one and one;
And if he hold had the promeſſe,
And done that longes to gentilneſſe,
And fulfilled the princes beheſt,
This haſtie farme had ben a reſt,
And now is unrecoverable,
And us a ſlaundir aye durable,
Wherefore I ſay, as of counſaile
In me is none that may availe,
But if ye liſt for remembraunce
Purvey and make ſuch ordinaunce
That the quene whiche that was ſo meke,
With all her women dede or ſeke,
Might in your land a chappill have,
With ſome remembraunce of her grave,
Shewing her end with the pity
In ſome notable old city,
And nigh unto an highe way,
Where every wight might for her pray,
And for all hers that have been trew:
And even with that ſhe changid hew,
And twiſe wiſhid after the deth,
And ſight, and thus paſſid her breth.
Then ſaid the lordis of the hoſt,
And ſo concludid leſt and moſt,
That they would in houſis of thacke
Ther livis lede, and were but blacke,
And forſake all ther pleſaunces,
And turne all joy to penaunces,
And bere the ded prince to the barge,
And namid them ſhould have the charge;
And to the herſe where lay the quene
The remnaunt went and doune on knene,
Holding ther honds, on high con crie,
Mercy, mercy. evèrich thrie,
And curſed the time that evir ſlouth
Should have ſeche maſtirdome of trouth,
And to the barge a longe mile
They bare her forth, and in a while
Alle the ladies one and one
By companies were brought echone,
And paſt the ſe and toke the land,
And in new herſis on a ſand,
Put and brought werin all anon
Unto a city cloſed with ſtone,
Where it yhad ben uſid aye
The kingis of the land to lay,
After they raignid in honours,
And writ was which were conquerours,
In an abbey of nunnis blake,
Which accuſtomid were to wake,
And of uſage riſe ech a night
To pray for every livis wight:
And ſo befell, as is the guiſe,
Ordeint and ſaid was the ſerviſe
Of the prince and eke of the quene
So devoutly as might yben,
And aftir that about the herſes
Full many oriſons and verſes
Withoutin note ful hertily
Said were, and that full ſoftily
That all the night till it was day
The peple in the church con pray
Unto the holy Trinitie
Of thoſe ſoulis to have pitie.
And when the night ypaſt and ronne
Was, and the newè day begonne,
The yong morow with rayis red,
Which from the ſonne eer all con ſpred,
Atempirid clere was and faire,
And made a tyme of wholſome aire,
Befell a wondir caſe and ſtrange
Among the peple, and gan change
Sone the word and every wo
Unto a joy, and ſome to two;
A bird all fedrid blew and greene,
With bright rayis like gold betwene,
As ſmall thred ovir every joynt,
All full of colour ſtrange and coint,
Uncouth, and wondirfull to ſight,
Upon the quen'is herſe con light,
And ſong full low and ſoftily
Thre ſongis in her harmony,
Unlettid of every wight,
Til at the laſt an agid knight,
Which ſemid a man in grete thought,
Like as he ſet all thing at nought,
With viſage and ein al forwept,
And pale, as a man long unſlept;
By the herſis as he yſtode
With haſty hondling of his hode
Unto a prince that by him paſt
Ymade the bridde ſomwhat agaſt,
Wherefore ſhe roſe and left her ſong,
And departed from us among,
And ſpred her wingis for to paſſe
By the place where he entrid was,
And in his haſt, ſhortly to tell,
Him hurt, that backeward downe he fell
From a window richly ypeint
With lives of many divers ſeint,
And bet his wingis and bled faſt,
And of the hurt thus died and paſt,

And lay there well an hour and more,
Till at the laſt of bridds a ſcore
Come and aſſemblid at the place
Where the window ybrokin was,
And made ſwiche wamentacioun
That pity was to here the ſoun,
And the warblis of ther throtis
And the complaint of ther notis,
Which from joy clene ywas reverſed;
And of them one the glas ſone perſed,
And in his boke of colours nine
An herbe he brought floureleſſe, all grene,
All full of ſmall levis and plaine,
Swart, and long with many a vaine,
And where his fellow lay this dede
This herbe he down laid by his hede,
And dreſſid it full ſoftily,
And hong his hed and ſtode thereby,
Which herb in leſſe than half an houre
Gan oer all knit, and aftir floure
Full out, and wexin ripe the ſede,
And right as one anothir ſede
Would, in his beke he toke the graine,
And in his fellowes bike certaine
It put, and thus within the third
Up ſtode and prunid him the bird
Which ded had be in all our fight,
And both togithir forth ther flight
Toke, ſinging from us, and ther leve
Was none diſturb 'hem would me greve.
And when they partid were and gone
Th' abbeſſe the ſedis ſone echone
Gathirid had, and in her hand
The herbe ſhe toke, well aviſand
The leſe, the ſede, the ſtalke, the floure,
And ſaid it had a gode ſavour,
And was no common herb to find,
And well approved of uncouth kind,
And than othir more vertouſe;
Who ſo have it might for to uſe
In his nede flowre, or leſe, or graine,
Of ther hele might ybe certaine;
And laid it downe upon the herſe
Where lay the quene, and gan reherſe
Echone to' othir that they had ſene;
And taling thus the ſede wex grene,
And on the drie herſe gan to ſpring
Which me thought was a wondrous thing,
And aftir that floure and new ſede,
Of which the peple all toke hede,
And ſaid it was ſothe grete miracle,
Or medicine fine more than triacle,
And were well done there to aſſay
If it might eſe in any way
The corſis, which with torchè light
They wakid had there all that night:
Some did the lordis their conſent,
And all the peple' thereto content
With eſie words and litil fare,
And made the quen'is viſage bare,
Which ſhewid was to all about,
Wherefore in ſwone fell whole the rout,
And were ſo ſory moſt and leſt
That long of weping they not ceſt,
For of ther lord the remembraunce
Unto them was ſuch diſpleſaunce
That for to live they called a paine,
So were they very true and plaine.
And after this the gode abbeſſe
Of the graine gan to cheſe and dreſſe
Thre, with her fingirs clene and ſmale,
And in the quen'is mouth by tale
One aftir othir eſily
She put 'hem and full conningly,
Which ſhewid ſone ſuch vertue
That previd was the medi'cine true,
For with a ſmiling countinaunce
The quene uproſe, and of uſaunce,
As ſhe was wont to every wight,
She made gode chere, for whiche ſight
The peple kneling on the floures
Thought they in heven were ſoule and bones;
And to the prince where he ylay
They went to make the ſame aſſay,
And when the quene it undirſtode,
And how the medicine was gode,
She preyid ſhe might have the graines
To relevin him from the paines
Which ſhe and he had both endured,
And to him went and ſo him cured,
That ſtreight within a litil ſpace
Luſty and freſhe on live he was,
And in gode hele, and whole of ſpech,
And lough, and ſaid, Gramercy, lech!
For which the joy throughout the town
So gret was that the bellis ſown
Afraied the peple a journay
About the citie every way,
And come and aſkid cauſe and why
They rongin were ſo ſtatily?
And aftir that the quene th' abbeſſe,
Made diligence or they would ceſſe,
Such that of ladies ſone a rout
Sewing the quene was all about,
And called by name echone and told,
Was none forgettin young ne old;
There mightin men ſe joyis new
When the medicine fine and trew
Thus reſtorid had every wight,
So well the quene as the knight,
Unto full perfit joy and hele,
That fleting they were in ſuch wele
As folke that wouldin in no wiſe
Deſire more parfit paradiſe.
And thus when paſſed was the ſorow,
With mikil joye ſone on the morow
The king, the quene, and every lord,
With all the ladies, by' one accord
Helde a generall aſſembly:
Gret cry was made through the country,
The which aftir as ther intent
Was turnid to a parliament,
Where was ordainid and aviſed
Every thing and wel deviſed
That pleſin might to moſt and leſt,
And there concludid was the feſt
Within the yle for to beholde
With full conſent of young and old,

All in the ſame wiſe as before,
As thing ſhould be withoutin more,
And thei ſhippid and thithir went,
And into ſtraungè relmis ſent,
To kingis, quenes, and ducheſſes,
To divers princes and princeſſes,
Of ther linage, and can them pray
That it might like them at that day
Of mariage, for ther diſport,
Come ſe the yle and them diſport,
Where ſhould be jouſtis and turnaies,
And armis done in othir waies,
Signifying oer all the day
Aftir Aprilis within May,
And was aviſed that ladies tweine,
Of gode eſtate and well beſeine,
With certaine knightis and ſquiers,
And of the quen'is officers,
In mannir of an embaſſade,
With certain lettirs cloſed and made,
Should take the bargè and depart,
And ſeke my lady every part
Till they her ſound for any thing
Both chargid have the quene and king,
And as ther lady and maiſtres
Her to beſeke of gentilnes
At the day there for to yben,
And oft her recommaund the quene,
And prayis for all loves to haſt,
For but ſhe come all woll be waſt,
And the feſt but a buſineſſe
Withoutin joy or luſtineſſe,
And toke them tokins, and gode ſpede
Praid God ſend 'hem aftir ther nede.
Forth went the ladies and the knights,
And were out fourtene daies and nights,
And brought my lady in ther barge,
And had well ſped and done ther charge;
Whereof the quene ſo herti'ly glad
Was, that in ſoth ſuch joy ſhe had
When that the ſhip approchid lond
That ſhe my lady on the ſond
Met, and in armis ſo conſtraine,
That wondir was behold them twaine,
Which to my dome during twelve houres
Neithir for hete ne watry ſhoures
Departid not no company
Saving themſelfe, but none them by,
But gave them layſour at ther eſe
To reherſin joy and diſeſe
Aftir the pleſure and courages
Of ther young and tendir ages;
And aftir with many a knight
Brought thei were where as for that night
They partid not, for to pleſaunce
Content was hert and countinaunce
Both of the quene and my maiſtreſſe,
This was that night ther buſineſſe;
And on the morow with huge rowt
This prince of lordis him about
Come, and unto my lady ſaid,
Of her comming glad and well paid
He was, and full right conningly
Her thankid and full hertily,
And lough and ſmiled, and ſaid, Ywis
That was in doubt in ſafety is;
And commaundid do diligence,
And ſpare for neithir gold ne ſpence,
But make redy, for on the morow
Yweddid, with Saint John to borow,
He would ybe withoutin more,
And let them wite this leſe and more.
The morow come, and the ſervice
Of mariage in ſuch a wiſe
Yſaid was, that with more honour
Was nevir prince ne conquerour
Ywedde, ne with ſuch company
Of gentilneſſe in chivalry,
Ne of ladies ſo gretè routs,
Ne ſo beſeen as all abouts
They werin there, I certifie
You on my life, withoutin lie.
And the feſt hold was in tentis,
As to tell you mine entent is,
In a rome in a largè plaine,
Undir a wode in a champaine,
Betwixt a rivir and a well,
Where nevir had abbay nor ell
Yben, ne kirke, houſe, ne village,
In time of any man'is age,
And durid thre monithis the feſt
In one eſtate, and nevir ceſt
From erly riſing of the ſonne
Till the day ſpent was and yronne
In juſting, daunsing, luſtineſſe,
And all that ſownad to gentilneſſe.
And as me thought the ſecond morow,
Whan endid was all old ſorow,
And in ſurety evèry wight
Had with his lady ſlept a night,
The prince, the quene, and all the reſt,
Unto my lady made requeſt,
And her beſought oftin and praied
To mewardes to be well apaied,
And conſidir mine oldè trouth,
And on my painis havin routh,
And me accept to her ſerviſe
In ſuch formè and in ſuch wiſe
That we both mightin be as one;
Thus praied the quene and everichone;
And for there ſhould me be no nay
They ſtintin juſting all a day
To pray my lady, and requere
To be content and out of fere,
And with gode hert make frendly chere,
And ſaid it was a happy yere;
At which ſhe ſmiled, and ſaid, Ywis
I trow well he my ſervaunt is,
And would my welfare, as I trift,
So would I his, and would he wiſt
How and I knewè that his trouth
Continue would withoutin slouth,
And be ſuch as ye here report,
Reſtraining both courage and ſport,
I couth conſent at your requeſt
To be ynamid of your feſt,
And doin aftir your uſaunce
In obeying of your pleſaunce:

At your requeſt this I conſent,
To pleſin you in your entent,
And eke the ſoveraine above,
Commandid hath me for to love,
And before othir him prefer,
Againſt which prince may be no wer,
For his powir ovir all raigneth,
That othir would for nought him paineth;
And ſith his will and yours is one
Contrary in me ſhall be none:
Tho (as me thoughtin) the promeiſe
Of marriage before the meſe
Deſirid was of every wight
To be madin the ſame night,
To put away all manir doubts
Of every wight thereabouts;
And ſo was do: and on the morow,
When every thought and every ſorrow
Diſlodgid was out of mine hert,
With every wo and every ſmert,
Unto a tent prince and princes
Me thought brought me and my maiſtres,
And ſaid we werin at full age
There to conclude our marriage,
With ladies, knightis, and ſquiers,
And a gret hoſt of miniſters,
With inſtruments and ſounes diverſe,
That long werin here to reherſe;
Which tent was church parochiall,
Ordaint was in eſpeciall
For the feſt and for the ſacre,
Where archbiſhop and archdiacre
Yſongin full out the ſerviſe
Aftir the cuſtome and the guiſe
And holie church'is ordinaunce:
And aftir that to dine and daunce
Brought were we, and to divers plaies,
And for our ſpedè ech wight praies,
And merry was both moſt and leſt,
And ſaid amendid was the feſt,
And were right glad lady and lord
Of the marriage and th' accord,
And wiſhid us hert'is pleſaunce,
In joy and hele continuaunce,
And to the minſtrils made requeſt
That in encreſing of the feſt
They wouldin touchin ther cordis,
And with ſome new joyeux accordis
Ymove the peple to gladneſſe,
And praidin of all gentilneſſe
Ech to painin them for the day
To ſhew his cunning and his play:
Tho began ſownis mervelous,
Entunid with accords joyous,
Round about and in all the tents,
With thouſandis of inſtruments,
That every wight to daunce them pained;
To be merry was none that fayned;
Which ſowne me troublid in my ſlepe,
That fro my bed anone I lepe,
Wening to have be at the feſt,
But when I woke all was yſeſt,
For there n'as lady ne creture,
Save on the wals old portraiteur
Of horſmen, haukis, and houndis,
And hurt dere all full of woundis,
Some like bittin, ſome hurt with ſhot,
And as my dreme ſemed that was not.
And when I wake and knew the trouth,
And ye had ſeen, of very routh
I trow ye would have wept a weke,
For nevir man yet halfe ſo ſeke
Iwent eſcapid with the life,
And was for fault that ſword ne knife
I find ne might my life t' abridge,
Ne thing that kervid ne had edge,
Wherewith I might my wofull pains
Have voidid with bleding of vains.
Lo, here my bliſſe! lo, here my paine!
Which to my lady' I do complaine,
And grace and mercy her requere
To end my wo and buſie fere,
And me accept to her ſerviſe,
And to her ſervice in ſuch wiſe,
That of my Dremè the ſubſtaunce
Might turnin once to cogniſaunce,
And cogniſaunce to very preve,
By full conſent and by gode leve;
Or els withoutin more I pray
That this ſame night or it be day
I mote unto my Dreme retourne,
And ſleping ſo forthe aie ſojourne
Aboutin the yle of pleſaunce
Undir my ladie's obeiſaunce,
In her ſervice, and in ſuch wiſe
As it pleſe her may to deviſe,
And grace onis to be accept
Like as I dremid when I ſlept,
And dure a thouſand yere and ten
In her gode will. *Amen, Amen!*

L'ENVOY.

Fairiſt of faire, and godelyiſt on live!
All my ſecre to you I plaine and ſhrive,
Requiring grace, and of my ſore complaint
To be be helid or martirid as a ſaint,
For by my trouth I ſwere, and by this boke,
Ye may both hele and ſle me with a loke.
Go forth, mine owne true hert innocent,
And with humbleneſſe do thine obſervaunce,
And to thy lady on thy knees preſent
Thy ſervice new, and think how grete pleſaunce
It is to live undir the obeiſaunce
Of her which that may with her lokis ſoft
Give the the bliſſe that thou deſiriſt oft.
Be diligent, awake, obey, and drede,
And be not wild of thy countinaunce,
But meke and glad, and thy nature yſede
To do ech thing that may her doe pleſaunce;
When thou ſhalt ſlepe have aie in remembraunce
Th' image of her which may with lokis ſoft
Give the the bliſſe that thou deſiriſt oft.
And if ſo be that thou her name find
Writtin in boke, or ellis upon wall,
Loke that thou do, as ſervaunt true and kind,
Thine obeiſaunce as ſhe were therewithall:
Fayning in love is breding of a fall
From the grace of her whoſe lokis ſoft
May give the bliſſe that thou deſiriſt oft.
Ye which that this ballade yredin ſhall
I pray you that you kepe you fro the fall.

THE DREME OF CHAUCER*.

I HAVE grete wonder, by this light,
How that I lyve, for day ne night
I maye not ſlepin welny nought;
I have ſo many' an ydle thought,
Purely for the defaute of ſlepe,
That by my trouth I take no kepe
Of nothing howe it cometh or gothe,
Ne me n'ys nothing leſe nor lothe;
Al is iliche gode to me
Joye or ſorowe where ſo it be,
For I have ſelinge in nothing,
But as it were a maſid thing
Al day in pointe to fall adoun,
For ſorowful ymaginacioun
Is alway wholy in my minde.
And well ye wote that againſte kinde
It were to livin in this wiſe,
For nature ne wolde not ſuffiſe
Unto none erthy creature
Not longe tyme to endure
Withoutin ſlepe and be in ſorowe,
And I ne may ne night ne morowe
Slepin, and this melancolye
And drede I havin for to die;
Defaute of ſlepe add hevineſſe
Hath ſlaine my ſpirite of quickneſſe,
That I have loſt al luſtihed;
Soche fantaſies ben in mine hed
So I n'ot what is beſt to do:
But men might aſkin me whi ſo
I may not ſlepe, and what me is?
But nathèles who aſkith thys
Leſeth his aſkyng trewily;
My ſelvin can not telling why
The ſothe, but trewly, as I geſſe,
I holde it be a ſikeneſſe
That I have ſuffrid this eyght yere,
And yet my bote is ner the nere,
For there is phiſicien but one
That may me hele; but that is done;
Paſſin we ovir until efte;
That wil not be mote nedes be leſte:
Our firſt matir is gode to kepe.
So whan ſawe I might not ſlepe
Til now of late this othir night
Upon my bedde I ſate upright,
And bade one rechin me a boke,
A romaunce and it me toke
To rede, and drive the night away;
For why? me thought it betir play
Than play either at cheſſe or tables.
And in this boke were writtin fables
That clerkis had in olde time
And other poetes put in rhime
To rede, and for to be in minde,
While men lovid the lawe of kinde:
This boke ne ſpake but of ſoche thinges
Of quenis livis and of kinges,
And many othir thingis ſmale;
Amonge al this I fond a tale
Whiche that me thought a wondir thing.
This was the tale. There was a king
That hight Ceix, and had a wife
The beſt that mightin berin lyfe,
And this quene hight Alcyone;
So it befil thereaftir ſone
This king wol wendin ovir ſe;
To tellin ſhortly whan that he
Was in the ſe thus in this wiſe
Soche a tempeſt began to ryſe
That brake ther maſte and made it fal,
And cleſte ther ſhip and dreint 'hem al,
That nevir was founde, as it telles,
Ne borde ne man, ne nothing elles:
Right thus this king yloſte his life.
Nowe for to ſpekin of his wife.

* By the perſon of a mourning knight ſitting under an oak, is meant John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaſter, greatly lamenting the deth of one whom he entirely loved, ſuppoſed to be Blanch the Dutcheſs. *Urry.*

This ladie that was lefte at home
Hath wondir that the kinge ne come
Home, for it was a longè terme;
Anone her herte began to yerne,
And for that her thought evirmo
It was not wele, her thoughtin so,
She longid so aftir the king,
That certes it were a pitous thing
To tell her hertely sorowful lyfe
Whiche that she had this noble wife,
For him she lovid aldirbest;
Anon she sent both est and west
To seke him but they founde him nought.
Alas (quod she) that I was wrought!
And where my lorde my love be ded
Certis I n'yl nevir ete bred,
I make a vowe to my God here,
But I mowe of my lordè here.
Soch sorowe this lady to her toke,
That trewly I, that made this boke,
Yhad soche pite and soche routhe
To rede her sorowe, that by my trouthe
I farid the worse al the morowe
Aftir to thinkin on her sorowe.
So whan that she coude here no worde
That no man myghtin finde her lorde
Ful ofte she swouned, and saide Alas!
For sorow ful nigh wode she was,
Ne she ne coude no rede but one,
But downe on knees she sate anone
And wept, that pitie was to here.
A! mercy, my swete lady dere!
Quod she to Juno, her goddesse,
Helpith me out of this distresse,
And yeve me grace my lorde to se
Sone, or to wete where so he be,
Or howe he fareth, or in what wise,
And I shal make you sacrifice,
And wholly yours become I shal,
With gode wil, body, herte, and al;
And but thou wolte this, lady swete
Sendin me grace to slepe, and mete
In my slepe some certaine swevin
Where through that I may knowe evin
Whethir my lorde be quicke or ded
With that worde she hinge down the hed,
And fel in a swonne as colde as stone;
Her women caught her up anone,
And broughtin her in bed al naked,
And she for wepid and forwaked
Was wery, and thus the ded slepe
Ysel on her or she toke kepe,
Through Juno that had herde her bone,
That madin her to slepè sone;
For as she praide right so was don
In dede, for Juno right anon
Ycallid thus her messangere
To do' her craunde, and he come nere:
Whan he was come she bad him thus;
Go bet (quod Juno) to Morpheus,
Thou knowest him wel, the god of Slepe;
Nowe understande wel, and take kepe,
Say thus on my behalfe, that he
Go fast into the gretè se,

And bid him that on alle thinge
He take up Ceix body the kinge,
That lieth ful pale and nothinge rody;
Byd him crepin into the body,
And do it gone to Alcyone
The quene, there she lyith alone,
And shewe her shortely' it is no nay
Howe it was dreint this othir day,
And do the body speke right so
Right as it was wonnid to do
The whilis that it was alyve:
Goith nowe fast, and hye the blive.
This messanger toke leve and went
Upon his way, and nevre' he stente
Tyl he came to the darke valey
That stante betwixt in rokis twey,
There nevir yet grewe corne ne gras,
Ne tre, ne nothing that ought was,
Ne best ne man, ne nothing elles,
Save that there werin a fewe welles
Came renning fro the clyffes adowne
That made a dedly slepinge sowne,
And rennin downe right by a cave
That was undir a rocke ygrave
Amyd the valey wondir depe
There as these goddis lay aslepe,
Morpheus and Eclympasteyre,
That was the god of Slep'is heire,
That slepte and did none othir werke.
This cave ywas also derke
As hel pitte; ovir all aboute
They had gode leyfire for to route
To vye who mightin slepè best;
Some hinge ther chinne upon ther brest,
And slepte upright ther hed yhed,
And some lay nakid in ther bed,
And sleptin whiles their dayis last.
This messaunger come renning fast,
And cried, Ho, ho! awake anone!
It was for naught; there herde him none;
Awake, (quod he) who lyith there?
And blewe his horne right in ther ere,
And cried Awakith! wondir hie.
This god of Slepe with his one eye
Cast up, and asked Who clepith there?
It am I, (quod this messangere)
Juno bade that thou shouldist gone,
And toldin him what he should done
As I have tolde you here before,
It is no nede reherse it more,
And wente his way whan he had saide.
Anone this god of Slepe abraide
Out of his slepe and gan to go,
And did as he had bidde him do;
He toke up the ded body sone,
And bare it forthe to Alcyone
His wife, the quene, there as she lay,
Right even a quartir before day,
And stode right at her bedd'is fete,
And callid her right as she hete
By name, and said; My swetè wife!
Awake, let be your sorowful lyfe,
For in your sorow there lyth no rede,
For certes, swete love! I am but dede;

Ye ſhall me ner on lyve yſe :
But, gode ſwete herte ! I praye that ye
Bury my body ; ſoche a tide
Ye mowe it finde the ſe beſide :
And farewel ſwete ! my world'is bliſſe !
I pray that God your ſorowe lyſſe :
To lytel while our bliſſe ylaſteth.
With that her eyin up ſhe caſteth,
And ſawe naught. Alas ! for ſorowe
She died within the thirde morowe.
But what ſhe ſaid more in that ſwowe
I may nat tellin you as nowe ;
It were to longe for to dwel :
My firſt matere I wil you tel
Wherfore I have ytolde this thinge
Of Alcyone and Ceix the kinge.
For this nroche dare I ſayin well,
I had be dolvin everidel,
And ded, right through defaute of ſlepe,
Yf I ne had red and take kepe
Of this ilke tale next before,
And I wil tellin you wherfore,
For I ne might for bote ne bale
Slepin or I had redde this tale
Of this ydreinte Ceix the Kinge,
And of the goddis of Slepinge,
Whan I had red this tale wele,
And ovirloked it everidele,
Me thought wondir if it were ſo,
For I had ner herde ſpeke or tho
Of no goddis that couldin make
Men for to ſlepe ne for to wake,
And I ne knewe ner God but one,
And in my game I ſaid anone,
(And yet me lyſt right il to pley)
Rather than that I ſhuldin dey
Thorough defaute of ſlepinge thus
I woldin gyve thilke Morpheus,
Or that goddeſſe hight Dame Juno,
Of ſome wight elſe, I ne rought who,
To make me ſlepe and have ſome reſt
I will give him the alther beſt
Yefte that er he abode his lyve
And hereonwarde right now as blyve,
If he woll make me ſlepe a lite,
Of downe of purè dovis white
I wol yeve him a ſether bed
Rayid with gold, and right wel cled
In fine blacke ſattin doutremere,
And many a pilowe, and every here
Of clothe of Raines to ſlepe on ſofre,
Him thare not nede to turnin ofte ;
And I wol yeve him al that falles
To his chambre and to his halles,
I wol do painte them with pure golde,
And tapite them ful many folde ;
Of one ſute this ſhal he yhave,
If that I wiſte where were his cave,
If he can make me ſlepin ſone,
As did the goddeſſe Quene Alcyone ;
And thus this ylke god Morpheus
May winnin of me mo fees thus
Than er he wanne ; and to Juno
That is his goddeſſe I ſhall ſo do,
I trowe that ſhe ſhal holde her paide.
I had unneth that worde iſaide,
Right thus as I have toldin you,
Than ſodeinly, I ne wiſte howe,
Soche a luſte anone me ytoke
To ſlepe, that right upon my boke
I fel aſlepe, and therwith even
Me mette ſo inly ſoche a ſweven,
So wondirfull, that nevir yet
I trowe no man ne had the wit
To connin wel my ſwevin rede,
No, nought Joſeph withoutin drede
Of Egypt, he which that rad ſo
The king'is metinge Pharao,
No more than conde the leſte of us,
Ne nat ſcarſly Macrobeus,
He that wrote al the' aviſion
Whiche that he met Kinge Scipion,
The noble man, the African,
Soche mervaillis fortunid than
I trowe, arede my dremis even ;
Lo ! thus it was, this was my ſweven :
Me thoughtin thus, that it was Maye,
And in the dawning there I lay
Me met thus in my bed al naked,
And lokid forthe, for I was waked
With ſmalè foulis a gret hepe,
That had afraied me out of my ſlepe
Through noiſe and ſwetneſſe of ther ſonge ;
And as me met they fate amonge
Upon my chambre roſe without,
Upon the tyles ovre al about,
And evèriche ſonge in his wiſe
The moſte ſwete and ſolempne ſervile
By note that evir man I trowe
Had herde, for ſome of them ſonge lowe,
Some high, and al of one accorde :
To tellin ſhortly, at o worde,
Was nevir herde ſo ſwete a ſteven,
But it had be a thinge of heven,
So merie a ſowne, ſo ſwete entunes,
That certis for the towne of Tewnes
I n'olde but I had herde them ſinge,
For al my chambre gan to ringe
Through ſinging of ther harmony,
For inſtrument nor melody
Was no where herde yet halfe ſo ſwete,
Nor of acorde halfe ſo mete,
For there was none of them that fained
To ſinge, for eche of them him pained
To finde out many crafty notes,
They ne yſparid nat ther throtes ;
And, ſoth to ſaine, my chambre was
Ful wel depaintid, and with glas
Were al the windowes wel yglaſed
Ful clere, and nat an hole ycraſed,
That to beholde it was grete joy,
For wholly al the ſtory of Troy
Was in the glaſinge ywrought thus,
Of Hector and Kinge Priamus,
Achilles and Kinge Lamedon,
And eke Medea and Jaſon,
Of Paris, Heleine and Lavine ;
And all the walles with colours fine

Were paintid, bothe texte and gloſe,
And al The Romaunte of the Roſe:
My wyndowes werin ſhet ech one,
And through the glaſſe the ſunne yſhone
Upon my bed with bright bemis,
With many glad gildy ſtremis;
And eke the welkin was ſo faire,
Blewe, bright, and clere, ywas the ayre,
And ful attempre', in ſothe it was,
For neithir colde ne hote it n'as,
Ne' in al the welkin was no clowde.
And as I lay thus, wondir lowde
Me thought I herde an huntir blowe
T' aſſay his gret horne, and to knowe
Whethre' it was clere or horſe of ſowne;
And I herde goynge up and downe
Men, horſis, houndes, and othir thinge,
And al men ſpekin of huntinge,
How they wolde ſle the harte with ſtrength,
And how the harte had upon length
So moche enboſed, I n'ot nowe what.
Anon right whan I herdin that,
How that they wolde on huntinge gone,
I was right glad, and up anone
I toke my horſe, and forth I wente
Out of chambre; I nevir ſtente
Tyl I come to the felde without,
There ovirtoke I a grete rout
Of huntirs and of foreſters,
And many relaies and limers,
That hied 'hem to the foreſt faſt,
And I with 'hem: ſo at the laſt
I aſkid one lad, a lymere,
Say, felowe, who ſhal huntin here?
(Quod I) and he anſwered ayen,
Sir, the Emperour Octonyen,
(Quod he) and he is here faſte by.
A goddes halfe, in gode tyme, (quod I)
Than go we faſt, and gan to ride:
Whan we come to the foreſt ſide
Every man ydyd right ſone
As unto huntinge fel to done.
The maiſtir hunte anone ſote hote
With his clere horne yblewe thremote
At the uncouplinge of his houndis.
Within a while the harte founde is:
I halowed and rechaſid faſt
A longe time: and ſo at the laſt
This harte rouſid and ſtale away
Fro al the houndes a privy way.
The houndes had ovirſhot him all,
And were on a defaulte yſal,
Therwith the hont full wondir faſt
Yblewe a forloyn at the laſte:
I was go walkid fro my tre,
And as I went there came by me
A whelpe, that fawned me as I ſtode,
That had folowed and coude no gode;
It came and crepte to me as lowe,
Right as it had me wele yknowe,
Helde down his hed and joyned his eres,
And laide al ſmothe adowne his heres.
I wolde have caught it up anone;
It fled, and was fro me ygone:
As I folowed and it forth went,
Downe by a floury grene it went
Ful thick of graſſe ful ſofte and ſwete,
With flouris fele fare undir fete,
And lytil uſed, it ſemid thus,
For bothe Flora and Zephyrus,
They two that makin flouris growe,
Had made ther dwelling there I trowe,
For it was on for to beholde
As though the erthe there envye wolde
To be gayir than is the heven,
To havin mo flouris ſoche ſeven
As in the welkin ſterris be,
It had forget the povirte
Of Wintir, through his colde morowes
That made it ſuffre, and his ſorowes
All was forieten, and that was ſene,
For all the wode was woxin grene,
Swetneſſe of dewe had made it waxe.
It is no nede eke for to axe
Where there were many grene greves,
Or thicke of trees ſo ful of leves,
And every tree ſtode by him ſelve
Fro othir wel ten fote or twelve,
So grete trees and ſo huge of ſtrength,
Of fourty' or fifthy ſadome length,
All clene withoutin bowe or ſticke,
With croppis brode, and eke as thicke;
They werin not an ynche aſonder,
That it was ſhadde ovir all under;
And many' an hart and many' an hinde
Was both before me and behinde,
Of fawnis, fowirs, buckis, does,
Was ful the wodde, and many roes,
And many ſquirrils, that ſete
Ful high upon the trees and ete.
And in ther manir madin feſtes:
Shortly, it was ſo ful of beſtes
That though Argus the noble countour
Yſate to rekin in his countour,
And rekin with his figures ten,
For by tho figures newe al ken
If they be crafty, reken and nombre,
And tel of every thing the nombre,
Yet ſhulde he faile to rekin even
The wonders me met in my ſweven:
But forthe I romed right wondir faſte
Downe through the wode; ſo at the laſte
I was ware of a man in blacke,
That ſate, and had yturned his backe
Unto an ooke and huge tre;
Lord! tho thought I, who may that be?
What eylith him to ſittin here?
And anon right I went him nere;
Than fourtde I ſitte evin upright
A wondir faire welfaring knight,
By the manir me thoughtin ſo
Of gode mokil, right yonge therto,
Of the' age of foure-and-twenty yere,
Upon his berde but litil here,
And he was clothid al in blacke;
I ſtalkid even unto his backe;
And there I ſtode as ſtil as ought,
The ſothe to ſay he ſaw me nought;

For why? he hinge his hed adowne,
And with a dedly ſorowful ſowne
He made of rime ten verſes or twelve
Of a complainte unto himſelve,
The moſte pite and the moſt routhe
That evir I herde, for by trouthe
It was grete wondir that Nature
Might ſuffre any creäture
To have ſoche ſorow' and he not ded;
Ful pitous pale, and nothing red,
He ſaid a lay, a manir ſonge,
Withoutin note, withoutin ſonge,
And was this, for ful wel I can
Reherſe it; right thus it began:
I have of ſorrowe ſo grete wone,
That joye ne get I nevir none,
Nowe that I ſe my lady bright,
Which I have loved with all my might,
Is fro me ded, and is agone,
And thus in ſorowe' leſte me alone:
Alas! o Dethe! what eylith the
That thou n'oldiſt have takin me
Whan that thouſ toke my lady ſwete?
Of all godenes ſhe had none mete,
That was ſo faire, ſo freſhe, ſo fre,
So gode, that men may wel yſe.
Whan he had made thus his complainte
His ſorowful hert gan faſt fainte,
And his ſpiritis wexin dede,
The blode was fledde for pure drede
Downe to his herte to makin him warme,
For wel it feled the herte had harme,
To wete eke why it was adradde,
By kinde, and for to make it gladde,
For it is membre principal
Of the body, and that made al
His hewe ychaunge, and wexin grene
And pale for there no blode is ſene
Within no manir lymme of his.
Anon therwith, whan I ſawe this,
He farde thus yvil there he ſete,
I went and ſtode right at his ſete,
And grette him, but he ſpake right nought
But arguid with his owne thought,
And in his witte diſputid faſte
Bothe why and howe his lyfe might laſte,
Him thought his ſorowes were ſo ſmerte,
And lay ſo colde upon his herte.
So through his ſorowe' and holy thought
Made him that he ne herde me nought,
For he had welnye loſt his minde,
Though Pan, that men clepe god of Kinde
Were for his ſorowes ner ſo wrothe.
But at the laſt, to ſaine right ſothe,
He was ware of me howe I ſtode
Before him and did of my hode,
And had gret him as I beſt coude
Debonairly and nothing loude;
He ſaid, I pray the be not wrothe,
I herde the not, to ſaine the ſothe,
Ne I ſawe the not, Sir, truely.
Ah, gode Sir! tho no force (quod I)
I am right ſory' if I have ought
Diſtroublid you out of your thought;
Forieve me if I have myſſetake.
Yes, the amendes is light to make.
(Quod he) for there lithe non therto;
There is nothing miſſaide nor do.
Lo howe godely yſpake this knight,
As it had be anothir wight,
And made it neithir tough ne queint!
And I ſawe that, and gan me' aqueint
With him, and founde him ſo tretable,
Right wondir ſkylful and reſo'nable,
As me thoughtin, for all his bale,
Anon right I gan finde a tale
To him, to loke where I might ought
Have more knowleging of his thought.
Sir, (quod I) this game is ydone,
I holde that this hart be ygone,
Theſe huntis can him no where ſe.
I do no force therof, (quod he)
My thought is theron ner a dele.
By' our Lorde (quod I) I trowe you wele,
Right ſo me thinkith by your chere;
But, Sir, o thing wollin ye here?
Me thinketh in gret ſorowe' I you ſe,
But certis, Sir, and if that ye
Wolde aught diſcovir me your wo
I wolde, as wiſe God helpe me ſo,
Amende it if I can or may,
Ye mowin prove it by aſſay,
For by my trouthe, to make you whole
I wol do al my powir whole;
And telleth me of your ſorowes ſmert,
Paraunter it may eſe your herte,
That ſemeth ful ſyke undir your ſide.
With that he loked on me aſide,
As who ſaithe nay, that n'yl not be.
Graunt mercy, my gode frende! (quod he)
I thanke the that thou woldiſt ſo,
But it may ner the rather be do;
No man ne may my ſorowe glade,
That maketh my hewe to fal and fade,
And hath myn underſtanding lorne,
That me is wo that I was borne:
May nought make my ſorowis flyde,
Not all the rem'edies of Ovide,
Ne Orpheus, god of Melodie,
Ne Dædalus, with his playes flye,
Ne hele me may no phyſicien,
Nought Hippocrates ne Galen;
Me' is wo that I live houris twelve;
But whoſo wol aſſaye him ſelve
Whether his hert can have pite
Of any ſorowe let him ſe me,
I wretche, that dethe hath made al naked
Of al the bliſſe that er was maked,
I wrothe, the werſte of alle wightes,
That hate my dayis and my nightes;
My lyfe, my luſtis, be me lothe,
For alle fare and I be wrothe;
The pure deth is ſo ful my foe
That I wolde die it wil not foe,
For whan I folowe' it it wil flye,
I wold have him it n'il not me;
And this is ſaine withoutin rede,
Alway dyinge and be not dede,

That Siſyphus that lyeth in hel
Nay may not of more ſorowe tel;
And who ſo wiſte al, by my trouthe,
Al my ſorowe, but he hadde routhe
And pyte of my ſorowes ſmerte
That man yhath a fendely herte,
For whoſo ſeeth me firſt on morowe
May ſayne that he hath met with Sorowe,
For I am Sorowe', and Sorowe' is I,
Alas! and I wyl tel the why,
My ſorowe' is tournid to playnyng,
And al my laughtir to weping,
My glad thoughtis to hevineſſe,
In travaile is myn ydleneſſe,
And eke my reſt, my wele is wo,
My gode is harme, and evirmo
In wrathe is tournid my playning,
And my delite in ſorowing,
Myn hele is turned into ſickeneſſe,
In drede is al my ſyckerneſſe,
To derke is turnid al my lyght,
My wytte is foly, my day night,
My love is hate, my ſlepe wakyng,
My mirth and melis is faſting,
My countinaunce is nicete,
And al abawed where ſo I be,
My pece is pleding, and in werre,
Alas, howe might I fare in werre!
My boldeneſſe is turnid to ſhame,
For falſe Fortune hath played a game
At cheſſe with me, alas the while!
The traytereſſe falſe and ful of gyle,
That al behoteth and nothing halte,
She gothe upright and yet ſhe halte,
That baggith foule and lokith fayre,
The diſpitous and debonaire,
That ſcornith many a creture;
An ydole of falſe purtraiture
Is ſhe, for ſhe wol ſoné wryen;
She is the monſtri's hed ywryen,
As filthe, ovir yſtrowed with floures,
Her moſtè worſhip, and her floures,
To lyen, for that is her nature,
Withoutin faith, lawe, or meſure,
She falſe is, and evir laughing
With one eye, and that othir weping,
That is brought up ſhe ſet al downe;
I likin her to the ſcorpiowne,
That is a falſe and flateryng beſt,
For with his hed he makith feſt,
But al amyd his flatiringe
With his taile he wil ſorely ſtynge,
And envenim, and ſo wil ſhe;
She is the envious Charite,
That is aye falſe and ſemith wele,
So turnith ſhe her falſè whele
Aboute, for it is nothing ſtable,
Nowe by the fyre nowe at the table;
Ful many' one hath ſhe thus yblent;
She is playe of enchauntèment,
That ſemith one and is not ſo:
The falſè thefe what hath ſhe do
Troweſt thou? by' our Lorde I wil the ſay.
At cheſſe with me ſhe gan to play;
With her falſe draughtis ful divers
She ſtale on me, and toke my fers;
And whan I ſawe my fers away,
Alas! I couth no lengir play,
But ſayid, Farewel ſwete! ywis,
And farewel al that er there is;
Therwith Fortune yſayid Cheke here,
And mate inthe' myd poynt of the' checkere
With a paunè errant. Alas!
Ful craftyir to play ſhe was
Than Athalus, that made the game
Firſt of the cheſſe, ſo was his hame;
But God wolde I had ones or twiſe
Iconde and knowe the jeoperdiſe
That coude the Greke Pythagores,
I ſhulde have plaide the bet at ches,
And kept my fers the bet therby;
And though wherto? for trewily
I holde that wiſhe not worthe a ſtre,
It had be ner the bet for me,
For Fortune can ſo many' a wyle
Ther be but fewe can her begile,
And eke ſhe is the laſſe to blame,
My ſelfe I wolde have do the ſame,
Before God, had I ben as ſhe,
She ought the more excuſid be;
For this I ſay yet moré therto,
Had I be God, and might have do
My wyl, whan ſhe my fers ycaught
I wolde have drawen the ſamè draught,
For al ſo wiſe God gyve me reſte
I dare wel ſwere ſhe toke the beſte,
But throughe that draught I have ylorne
My blyſſe, alas that I was borne!
For evirmore I trowe trewly,
For al my wil, my luſte wholly
Is turne, but wote ye what to done?
By' our Lorde it is to dyin ſone,
For nothinge I ne leve it nought
But lyve and dye right in this thought;
There n'ys planet in firmamente,
Ne' in ayre ne' in erthe none elemente,
That they ne yeve me' a yefte echone
Of wepyng whan I am alone,
For whan that I adviſe me wele,
And bethinke me evèrydele
How that there lieth in rekininge
In my ſorowis for nothinge,
And howe there livith no gladneſſe
May gladdin me of my diſtreſſe,
And howe I have loſte ſuffiſaunce,
And therto I have no pleſaunce,
Than may I ſay I have right nought;
And whan al this falleth in my thought,
Alas! than am I ovircome,
For that is done this not to come:
I have more ſorowe than Tantale.
And whan I herde him tel this tale
Thus pitouſly as I you tell,
Unnethis myght I lengir dwell,
It did myn herte ſo mochill wo.
A, gode Sir! (quod I) ſay nat ſo,
Have ſome pite on your nature,
That fournid you to a creture;

Remembrith you of Socrates,
For he ne countith not thre ſtrees
Of nought that Fortune coude ydo.
No, (quod he) I ne can not ſo.
Why, gode Sir, yes parde, (quod I)
Ne ſay not ſo, for truily
Though ye had loſt the ferſis twelve,
And for ſorowe murdrid your ſelve,
Ye ſhulde be dampnid in this caſe,
By as gode right as Medea was,
That ſlough her childrin for Jaſon,
And Phyllis for Demophoon,
That hing her ſelf, ſo welaway!
For he had brokin his terme day
To come to her. Anothir rage
Had Dido, the Quene of Carthage,
That ſlough her ſelf for Æneas
Was falſe, for whiche a ſole ſhe was;
And Echo dyed for Narciſſus
Ne wolde nat love her; and right thus
Hath many' an othir ſoly done,
And for Dalila died Sampſone,
That ſloughe him ſelfe with a pilere;
But there is no man alive here
Wolde for ther feris make this wo.
Why ſo? (quod he) it is not ſo,
Thou woteſt ful lytil what thou meneſt,
For I have loſte more than thou weneſt.
And howe may that ybe? (quod I)
Gode Sir, tellith me al wholly
In what wiſe, howe, why, and wherfore,
That ye have thus your bliſſe ylore.
Blithely, (quod he;) come, ſit the doun;
I tel the on condicioun
Thou ſhalte wholly with all thy wit
Do thyne entente to herkin it.
Yes, Sir. Than ſwere thy trouthe therto,
Gladly to holdin the hereto.
I ſhal right blithe, ſo God me ſave,
Wholly with all the witte I have
Here you as wel as er I can.
A Godde's halfe, (quod he) and began.
Sir, (quod he) ſithins firſte I couthe
Have any manir witte fro youthe,
Or kindily underſtandinge
To comprehende in any thinge
What love was in mine owne wit,
Dredileſſe I have evir yet
Be tributary and yeve rente
To Love wholly, with gode entente,
And through pleſaunce become his thral
With gode wil, body, herte, and al;
Al this I put in his ſervage
As to my lorde, and dyd homage;
And full devoutly' I praide hym tho
He ſhulde beſet myne herte ſo
That it pleſaunce unto him were
And worſhip to my lady dere.
And this was long and many' a yere
(Er that min hert was ſet o where)
That I dyd thus, and ne wiſt why,
I trowe it came me kindily;
Paraunter I was thereto moſt able
As a white wal or a table,
For it' is redy to catche and take
Al that men wollin therin make,
Whethir men will portrey or painte
Be the werkis nevir ſo quainte.
And thilke tyme I farid right ſo,
I was able to' have lernid tho,
And to have conde as wel or better
Parauntir eithir arte or lettir,
But for love came firſt in my thought
Therfore I ne forgate it nought;
I chees love to be my firſt craſte,
And therfore it is with me laſte;
For why? I toke' it of ſo yonge age
That malice ne had my corage,
Not that time turnid to nothing
Thorough to mokil knowleging,
For that tyme Youth my maiſtireſſe
Governid me in ydilneſſe,
For it was in my firſte youth,
And though ful litil gode I couthe,
For al my werkis were flittyng
That time, and al my thought varying,
Al thinges were to me yliche gode,
That knewe I tho, but thus it ſtode:
It happed that I came on a day
In to a place there that I ſey
Trewly the fairiſt companie
Of ladies that er man with eye
Had ſene togithers in o place;
Shal I clepe it happe eithir grace
That brought me there? nought but Fortune,
That is to lyin ful comune,
The falſe traitireſſe perverſe,
God wolde that I coulde clepe her werſe,
For now ſhe worchith me ful wo,
And I wol tel the ſone why ſo.
Amonges theſe ladies thus echone,
The ſothe to ſayin, I ſawe one
That ne was lyke none of the route,
For I dare ſwere, withoutin doute,
That as the ſommer's ſonne bright
Is fairer, clerer, and hath more lyght,
Than any other planet in heven,
The mone or the ſterris ſeven,
For al the worlde right ſo had ſhe,
Surmountin 'hem al of beaute,
Of manir, and of comlyneſſe
Of ſtature, and wel ſet gladneſſe,
Of godelyhede, and ſo wel beſey,
Shortly, what ſhal I more yſey?
By God, and by his holowes twelve,
It was my ſwete right al her ſelve;
She had ſo ſtedfaſt countènaunce,
So noble porte and maintènaunce,
And Love, that wel yherde my bone,
Yhad eſpyid me thus ſone
That ſhe fill ſone in my thought;
As helpe me God ſo was I cought
So ſodainly, that I ne toke
No maner counſaile but at her loke
And at min herte; for why? her eyen
So gladly I trowe myn herte ſeyne,
That purely tho min owne thought
Said it were but ſerve her for nought

Than with anothir to be wele;
And it was ſothe, for every dele
I wil anone right tel the why:
I ſawe her daunce ſo comily,
Carol and ſing ſo ſwetily,
And laugh and play ſo womanly,
And lokin ſo debonairly,
So godely ſpeke and ſo frendely,
That certes I trowe that evirmore
N'as ſene ſo blisful a treſore;
For every here on her hed,
The ſothe to ſay, it was not red,
Ne neithir yelowe ne browne it n'as,
Me thought moſte like to golde it was;
And whiche eyin my lady had,
Debonaire, gode, and glad, and ſad,
Simple', of gode mokil, not to wide;
Therto her loke n'as not aſide,
Ne ovirthwart, but beſet ſo wele
It drewe and toke up everydele
Al whiche that on her gan beholde;
Her eyin ſemed anone ſhe wolde
Have mercy, Folly wendin ſo,
But it was ner the rathir do;
It n'as no counterfetid thinge,
It was her owne pure loking,
Whiche that the goddeſſe Dame Nature
Had made 'hem opin by meſure
And cloſe, for were ſhe ner ſo glad
Her loking was not foliſhe ſprad
Ne wildily though that ſhe plaide,
But er me thought her eyin ſaide
By God my wrathe is al forieve;
Therwith her liſte ſo well to live
That Dulneſſe was of her adrad;
She n'as to ſobre ne to glad;
In allè thingis more meſure
Ne had nevir I trowe creture;
But many' one with her loke ſhe herte,
And that fate her full lyte at herte,
For ſhe knewe nothinge of ther thought;
But wher ſhe knewe or knewe it nought
Algate ſhe ne' rought of 'hem a ſtre;
To get her love no nere n'as he
That woned at home than he in Inde;
The formiſt was alway behinde;
But gode folke ovir al othir
She loved as man may his brothir,
Of whiche love ſhe was wondir large
In ſkilful placis that bere charge;
But whiche a viſage had ſhe therto!
Alas! my herte is wondir wo
That I ne can diſcrivin it,
Me lackith bothe Engliſhe and wit
For to undo it at the ful,
And eke my ſpirites ben ſo dull
So gret a thinge for to deviſe;
I have no wyt that can ſuffyſe
To comprehendin her beaute;
But thus moche I dare ſaine, that ſhe
Was white, rody, freſhe, lifely hewed,
And every day her beaute newed;
And nyghe her face was aldirbeſte,
Per certis Nature had ſoche leſte
To make that faire, that trewly ſhe
Was her chefe patron of beaute,
And chefe enſaumple of al her werke
And monſtre, for be' it ner ſo derke
Me thinketh I ſe her evirmo;
And yet moreovir, though al tho
That ever lived were now a lyve
Ne wolde thei have founde to diſcrive
In al her face a wickid ſigne,
For it was ſad, ſimple', and benigne.
And ſoche a godely ſwetè ſpeche
Yhad that ſwete, my lyvis leche
So frendely, and ſo well ygrounded,
Upon reſon ſo wel ifounded,
And ſo tretable to al gode,
That I dare ſwere wel by the rode
Of eloquence was nevir ſonde
So ſwete a ſowning and faconde,
Ne trewir tonged, ne ſcornid laſſe,
Ne bet coude hele, that by the maſſe
I durſte ſwere, though the Pope it ſonge,
That ther was ner yet through her tonge
Man ne woman gretly harmid,
As for her was al harme yhid,
Ne laſſe flatiring in her worde,
That purely her ſimple roſorde
Was founde as trewe as any bonde
Or trouthe of any man'is honde.
Ne chide ſhe coulde nevir a dele,
That knowith al the worlde ful wele.
But ſoche a faireneſſe of a necke
Yhad that ſwete, that bone nor brecke
N'as there none ſein that miſſeſatte,
It was white, ſmothe, ſtreight, and pure flatte,
Withoutin hole or canel bone,
And by ſeming ſhe ne had none.
Her throte, as I have nowe memoire,
Semed as a rounde tour of yvoire,
Of gode gretneſſe, and not to grete;
And Faire White ywas ſhe hete,
That was my ladies name right,
And ſhe was therto faire and bright;
She ne had not her name wronge:
Right faire ſholdirs and body longe
She had, and armis evir lith,
Fattiſhe, fleſhy, nat greete ther with;
Right white handis, and nailis rede;
Rounde breſtis; and of a gode brede
Her hippis were; a ſtreight flatte backe,
I knewe on her none othir lacke,
That al her limmis n'ere pure ſewing,
In as ferre as I had knowing:
Therto ſhe coulde ſo wel yplaye
What that her lyſte, that I dare ſaye
That ſhe was lyke to torche bright,
That every man may take of light
Ynough, and it hath ner the leſſe
Of manir and of comlyneſſe.
Right ſo farid my lady dere,
For every wight of her manere
Moght catche ynough if that he wolde,
Yf he had eyen her to beholde,
For I dare ſwere wel if that ſhe
Had amonge tenne thouſande ybe

She woldin have be at the beſte
A cheſe myroure of al the feſte,
Though they had ſtondin in a rowe
To mennis eyen that coulde have knowe;
For, where ſo men had plaide or waked
Me thought the felowſhippe as naked
Withoutin her that I ſawe ones
As a corowne withoutin ſtones;
Trewily ſhe was to min eye
The' ſolein phœnix of Arabye,
For there livith nevir but one,
Ne ſuche as ſhe ne knowe I none:
To ſpeke of godeneſſe, trewly ſhe
Had as mochil debonairte
As er had Heſter in the Bible,
And more, if more were poſſible;
And, ſothe to ſayin, therwithal
She hadde a witte ſo general,
So whole enclinid to al gode,
That al her witte was ſette by the' rode
Without malyce, upon gladneſſe;
And therto' I ſawe ner yet a leſſe
Harmful than ſhe was in doing;
I ſay not that ſhe n' hadde knowyng
What harme ywas, or ellis ſhe
Had coulde no gode, ſo thinkith me;
And trewly for to ſpeke of trouthe,
But ſhe had had it had be routhe,
Therof ſhe had ſo moche her dele,
And I dare ſaine and ſwere it wele,
That Trouthe him ſelfe over al and al
Had choſe his manor principal
In her, that was his reſting place;
Therto ſhe had the moſt grace
To have ſtedfaſte perſeveraunce,
And eſy' attempre govirnaunce,
That evir I knewe or wiſte yet,
So pure ſufferaunt was her wit;
And reſon gladly ſhe' underſtode,
It ſolowid wel ſhe coulde gode;
She uſid gladly to do wele:
Theſe were her manirs every dele.
Therwith ſhe lovid ſo wel right
She wronge do wouldin to no wight;
No wight ne might do her no ſhame,
She lovid ſo wel her owne name.
Her luſt to holde no wight in honde,
Ne be thou ſikir ſhe wolde not fonde
To holdin no wight in balaunce
By halfe worde ne by countinaunce,
But if men wolde upon her lye,
Ne ſende men into Walakye,
To Pruiſe and to Tartarie,
To Aliſaundrie ne Turkye,
And bidde him faſt anon that he
Go hodeleſſe into the drie ſe,
And come home by the Carrenare;
And, Sir, be ye nowe full ryght ware
That I may of you here men ſaine
Wurſhippe or that ye come againe.
She ne uſed no ſoche knackis ſmale:
But therfore that I tel my tale,
Right on this ſame, as I have ſaide,
Was wholly al my love ylaide,
For certis ſhe was that ſwete wife,
My ſuffiſaunce, my luſte, my life,
Min hope, min hele, and al my bleſſe,
My worlde's welfare and my goddeſſe,
And I wholly' hers, and every dele.
By' our Lorde! (quod I) I trowe you wele,
Hardly your love was wel beſet,
I n'ot howe it might have do bet.
Bettir! ne not ſo wel (quod he.)
I trowe it, Sir, (quod I) pardc.
Nay leve it wel. Sir, ſo do I;
I leve you wel that trewily
You thought that ſhe ywas the beſt,
And to beholde the alderfaireſt,
Who ſo had loked her with your eyen.
With myn! nay, al whiche that her ſeyen
Sayid and ſwore that it was ſo,
And though they ne had I wolde tho
Have lovid beſt my lady fre
Though I had had al the beaute
That er had Alcibiades,
And al the ſtrength of Hercules,
And thereto had the worthineſſe
Of Aliſaundre', and al the' richeſſe
That evir was in Babyloine,
In Carthage or in Macedoine,
Or in Rome or in Nineve,
And therto al ſo hardy be
As was Hector, ſo have I joye,
That Achilles yſlough at Troye,
And therefore was he ſlayne alſo
In a temple, for bothe two
Were ſlaine, he' and Antilegius,
And ſo ſaithe Darius Fregius,
For the love of Polyxena,
Or ben as wiſe as Minerva,
I wolde evir withoutin drede
Have lovid her, for I muſt nede.
Nede! nay, trewly I gabbe nowe;
Nought nede, and I wol tellin howe,
For of golde wil min herte it wolde,
And eke to love her I was holde,
As for the fairiſt and the beſte;
She was as gode, ſo have I reſte,
As was Penelope of Grece,
Or as the noble wife Lucrece,
That was the beſte, he tellith thus
The Roman Titus Livius,
She was as gode, and nothing like,
Though ther ſtories be autentike,
Algate ſhe was as trewe as ſhe.
But wherfore that I tellin the,
Whan that I firſt my lady ſey
I was right yonge, the ſothe to ſey,
And ful grete nede I had to lerne,
Whan that myn herte woldin yerne;
To love it was a gret empriſe,
But as my wite wolde beſte ſuffiſe;
Aftir my yonge and childely wit
Withoutin drede I beſet it
To lovin her in my beſte wiſe,
To do' her wurſhip and the ſerviſe
Whiche that I coude tho, by my trouthe,
Withoutin faining eithir flouthe,

For wondir faine I wolde her fe;
So mokill it amendid me,
That whan I fawe her a morowe
I was warifhed of al my forowe
Of al day aftir tel' it were eve;
Me thoughtin nothinge might me greve
Were my forowes nevir fo fmerte,
And yet fhe fyt fo in min herte
That by my trouthe I n'oldè nought
For al this worlde out of my thought
Yleve my lady; no trewly.
Now by my trouthè, Sir, (quod I)
Me thinkith you have foche a chaunce
As fhrifte without in repentaunce.
Repentaunce nay, nay; fye! (quod he)
Shuldin I nowe repentin me
To love? nay, certes, than were I wel
Worfe than ywas Achitophel
Or Antenor, fo have I joye,
The traitour that betrayid Troye,
Or than the falfe Ganelion,
He that purchafid the traifon
Of Roulande and of Olivere;
Nay, while that I am alive here
I n'yl foriet her nevirmo.
Nowe, gode Sir, quod I to him tho,
Ye have wel tolde me here before,
It is no nede to reherfe it more,
Howe that ye fawe her firft, and where,
But wolde ye tel me the manere
To her whiche was your firftè fpeche,
Therof I woldè you befeche,
And howe that fhe knewe firft your thought,
Whethir ye lovid her or nought,
And telleth me eke what ye have lore;
I herde you tellin here before,
Ye faide thou n'otift what thou meneft,
For I have loft more than thou weneft?
And what loffe is that? (quod I tho;)
N'il fhe not love you? is it fo?
Or havin ye ought done amis,
That fhe hath left you? is it this?
For Godd'is love telleth me al.
Before God (quod fhe) and I fhal.
I fay right as I have yfaide,
On her was al my love ylaide,
And yet fhe n'ifte it ner a dele
Not longè tyme, levith it wele,
For be right fykir I durft nought
For al this worlde tel her my thought,
Ne' I wolde have wrathid her trewly;
For woft thou why? fhe was lady
Of the body that had the herte,
And whofo' hath that may not afterte.
But for to kepe me fro' ydleneffe
Trewly I dyd my bufineffe
To make fongis as I beft coude,
And oftin time I fonge 'hem loude,
And made fongis this a grete dele,
Although I coud nat make fo wele
Songis, ne knewe the arte fo al,
As coude Lamek'is fone Tubal,
That founde out firfte the arte of fonge,
For as his brothir's hamirs ronge
Upon his anvelt up and downe
Therof he toke the firftè fowne.
But Grekes faine of Pythagoras
That he the firft findir ywas
Of the' arte, Aurora tellith fo;
But therof no force of 'hem two;
Algatis fongis thus I made
Of my felyng, min herte to glade,
And lo! this was the althir firft,
I n'ot whethir it were the worft:
Lorde! it makith min hertè light
Whan that I thinke on that fwete wight
That is fo femely on to fe,
And wifhe to God it might fo be
That fhe wolde holde me for her knight,
My lady, that' is fo faire and bright.
Nowe have I tolde the, foth to fay,
My firftè fonge. Upon a day
I bethought me what mochil wo
And forowe that I fuffrid tho
For her, and yet fhe wifte it nought;
Ne tel her durft I not my thought:
Alas! thaught I, I can no rede,
And but I tel her, I am but dede,
And if I tel her, to fay forthe
I am adradde fhe wol be wrothe:
Alas' what fhal I than ydo?
In this debate I was fo wo
Me thought myne hertè braft atwaine,
So at the laft, fothe for to faine,
I bethought me that Dame Nature
Ne formid nevir in creture
So mochil beauty trewily
And bountie withoutin mercy.
In hope of that my tale I tolde
With forowe, as that I ner fholde
For nedis, and maugre myne hed
I muft have tolde her or be ded.
I n'ot wel howe that I began,
Ful yvil reherfe it I can,
And eke, as helpe me God withal,
I trowe it was in the difmal,
That was the ten woundes of Egypte.
For many a worde I ovirfkipte
In telling my tale, for pure fere
Left that my wordis myffefet were;
With forowful hert and woundes dede,
Softely, and quaking for pure drede
And fhame, and ftinting in my tale
For ferde, and min hewe allè paie;
Ful ofte I wexte bothe pale and red,
Bowing to her I hinge the hed;
I durft not onis loke her on,
For wit, manir, and al, was gone;
I faide, Mercy, fwete! and no more:
It n'as no game; it fate me fore.
So at the laft, the fothe to faine,
Whan that myne herte was come againe,
To tellin fhortly al my fpeche,
With whole herte I gan her befeche
That fhe wolde be my lady fwete,
And fwore and hertely gan her hete
Evir to be ftedfaft and trewe,
And love her alway freflily newe,

And nevir othir lady have,
And al her worſhip for to ſave
As I beſte coude, I ſwere her this,
For yours is al that er ther is,
For evirmore, myne hertè ſwete!
And ner to falſe you but I mete
I n'yl, as wiſe God helpe me ſo.
And whan I had my tale ydo
God wote ſhe' acomptid not a ſtre
Of al my tale, ſo thoughtin me:
To tel ſhortly, right as it is,
Trewly her anſwere it was this;
I can not nowe wel contreſete
Her wordis, but this was the grete
Of her anſwere: ſhe ſayid Nay
All utterly. Alas that day
The ſorowe' I ſuffrid and the wo!
That trewly Caſſandra, that ſo
Bewaylid the diſtruccion
Of Troyè and of Ilion
Had ner ſoche ſorowe as I tho;
I durſtin no more ſay therto
For pure fere, but yſtale away,
And thus I lyved ful many a day
That trewily I had no nede
Ferthir than at my bedd'is hede
Nevir a day to ſechin ſorowe,
I founde it redy every morowe;
For why? I loved her in no gere,
So it befell an othir yere
I thought onis I wouldin ſonde
To doe her knowe and undirſtonde
My wo; and ſhe well undirſtode
That I ne wilnid thyng but gode
And worſhip, and to kepe her name
Ovir all thynges, and drede her ſhame,
And was ſo buſie her to ſerve,
And pitie were I ſhouldin ſterve,
Sithe that I wilned none harme iwis,
So when my ladie knewe all this,
My ladie yave me all whollie
The noble yeſt of her mercie,
Savyng her worſhip by al waies;
Dredeleſſe I mene none othir waies,
And therewith ſhe yave me a ryng,
I trowè it was the firſtè thyng:
But if myne herte was iwaxe
Glad that it is no nede to axe.
As helpe me God I was as blive
Yraiſid as fro deth to live,
Of all happis the aldirbeſt,
The gladdiſt and the moſte at reſt
For truilie that ſwetè wight,
When I had wrong and ſhe the right,
She wouldin alwaie ſo godelie
Foryeve me ſo debonairlie;
In alle my youth, in allè chaunce,
She toke me in her govirnaunce;
Therewith ſhe was alwaie ſo true,
Our joye was evir iliche newe;
Our hertis werne ſo even a paire,
That nevir n'as that one contraire
Unto that othir for no wo,
For ſothe iliche thei ſuffrid tho.
O bliſſe, and eke o ſorowe bothe!
Iliche thei were bothe glad and wrothe,
All was us one withoutin were;
And thus we lived full many' a yere
So well I can not tellin how.
Sir, (quod I) and where is ſhe now?
Now! quod he, and yſtinte anone,
Therewith he woxe as dedde as ſtone,
And ſaied, Alas that I was bore!
That was the loſſe that here before
I tolde the that I had ylorne.
Bethinke the how I ſaied beforne
Thou woſte ful lityl what thou meneſt,
For I have loſte more then thou weneſt.
God wot, alas! right that was ſhe.
Alas, Sir! how? what maie that be?
She is dedde! Naie! Yes, by my trouthe.
Is that your loſſe? by God it' is routhe.
And with that wordè right anone
Thei gan to ſtrake forthe; all was done
For that tymè the hart huntyng.
With that me thoughtin that this kyng
Began homewardis for to ride
Unto a place was there beſide,
Whiche that was from us but a lite,
A long caſtill with wallis white,
By Sainct John, on a richè hill,
As me mette; but thus it befill:
Right thus me mette, as I you tell,
That in the caſtell there was a bell,
As it had ſmittin houris twelve,
And therewith I awoke my ſelve,
And ſound me lying in my bedde,
And the boke whiche that I had redde
Of Alcyone and Ceix the kyng,
And of the goddis of Slepyng,
I found it in myne hond ful evin;
Thought I this is ſo queint a ſwevin
That I would by proceſſe of tyme
Fonde to put this ſwevin in rime
As I can beſt, and that anon:
This was my ſwevin, now it' is doen.

This ſeems an envoy to the Duke of Lancaſter after his loſs of Blanch.

My maſter, &c. When of Chriſt our kyng
Was aſkid, What is trothe or ſothfaſtneſſe,
He not a worde anſwerde to that aſkyng,
As who ſaieth, no maune is all true I geſſe;
And therefore though I hight for to expreſſe
The ſorowe' and wo that is in mariage
I dare not writen of it no wickidneſſe,
Leſt I my ſelf fall eft in ſoche dotage.
I woll not ſaie how that it is the chaine
Of Sathanas on whiche he knawith ever,
But I dare ſaine were he out of his paine
As by his will he would be boundin never;
But thilkè dotid fole that eft hath lever
Ichainid be than out of priſone crepe,
God let hym nevir fro his woe diſcever,
Ne no man hym bewailin though he wepe.

But yet leſſe thou do worſe takith a wife;
Bet is to wedde than brennin in worſe wife;
But thou ſhalt have ſorowe on thy fleſhe thy life,
And ben thy wiv'is thralle, as ſaine theſe wiſe;
And if that holy writte maie not ſuffiſe,
Experience ſhall the teche, ſo maie happe:
Take the waie levir to be taken in Friſe
Then eſt to fall of weddyng in the trappe.

This lityl writte, proverbis or figure,
I ſend you, takith kepe of it I rede;
Unwiſe is he that can no wele endure;
If thou be ſikir put the not in drede.
The Wife of Bathe I praie you that ye rede
Of this matter whiche that we have en honde;
God grauntin you your life frely to lede
In fredome, for foule is it to be bonde.

THE ASSEMBLE OF FOULES.

All Fowles are gathered before Nature on St. Valentine's Day to chuſe their mates. A formal eagle being beloved of three tercels requireth a year's reſpite to make her choice, upon this triall, Qui bien aime tard oublie, *he that loveth well is ſlow to forget.*

The life ſo ſhort, the craft ſo long to lerne,
The aſſaye ſo hard, ſo ſharp the conqueryng,
The dredefull joy, alwaie that flit ſo yerne,
All this mene I by Love, that my felyng
Aſtonieth with his wondirfull werkyng
So ſore iwis, that when I on him thinke
Naught wete I well whether I flete or ſinke.

For all be that I knowe not Love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quitith folke ther hire,
Yet happith me full ofte in bokis rede
Of his miraclis and his cruill ire,
There rede I well he woll be lorde and ſire;
I dare not ſaie his ſtrokis be ſo ſore,
But God ſave ſoche a lorde! I can no more.

Of uſage, what for luſt and what for lore,
On bokis rede I oft, as I you tolde,
But wherfore that I ſpeke all this, naught yore
Agon it happid me for to beholde
Upon a boke iwritte with lettirs old,
And thereupon a certain thing to lerne,
The longè daie full faſt I radde and yerne;

For out of the old feldis, as men ſaieth,
Comith all this newe corne fro yere to yere,
And out of oldè bokis, in gode ſaieth,
Comith all this newe ſcience that men lere:
But now to purpoſe: as of this mattere
To redin forthe, it gan me ſo delite
That all the daie me thought it but a lite.

This boke of which I makin mencion
Entitlid was dight thus, as I ſhall tell,
Tullius of the Drame of Scipion;
Chapiters ſeven it had of heven and hell.
And yerth, and ſoulis that therein do dwell,
Of whiche, as ſhortly as I can it trete,
Of this ſentence I woll you ſaine the grete.

Firſt tellith it when Scipion was come
In Affrike how he metith Maſſiniſſe,
That hym for joie in armis hath inome;
Then tellith he her ſpeche and all the bliſſe
That was betwixt 'hem till the daie gan miſſe,
And how his aunceſter Affrikan ſo dere
Gan in his ſlepe that night till hym appere:

Then tellith it that from a ſtarrie place
How Affrikan hath hym Carthage yſhewed,
And warnid hym beſorne of all his grace,
And ſaied hym, What man, lerid eithir leude,
That lovith common profite well itheude,
He ſhould into a bliſfull place ywende,
There as joye is that laſt withoutin ende:

Then aſkid he if folke that here ben dede
Have life and dwellyng in an othir place?
And Affrikan ſaied Ye, withoutin drede,
And how our preſent worly liv'is ſpace
N'is but a manir deth, what waie we trace,
And rightfull folke ſhull gon aftir thei die
To heven, and ſhewid hym the Galaxie:

Then ſhewed he him the little yerth that here is
To regarde of the hevin's quantite,
And after ſhewid he hym the nine ſperis,
And aftir that the melodie herd he
That comith of thylke ſperis thryis thre,
That welles of muſike ben and melodie
In this worlde here and cauſe of harmonie:

Then ſaid he him, Sens that yerth was ſo lite,
And full of tourment and of hardè grace,
That ſle ne ſhuld hym in this worlde delite;
Then told he him in certain yeris ſpace
That every ſterre ſhould come into his place
There it was firſt, and all ſhould out of mind
That in this world is doen of all mankynd:

Then praied hym Scipion to tell hym all
The waie to come into that hevin blisse;
And he saied, First knowe thyself immortall,
And loke aie busely that thou werche and wisse
To common profite, and thou shalt not misse
To come swiftly unto that place dere
That full of blisse is and of soulis clere.

And brekirs of the lawe, the sothe to saine,
And likerous folke aftir that thei ben dede,
Shull whirle about the worlde alwaie in pain
Till many' a worlde be passid, out of drede,
And then foryevin all ther wickid dede;
Then shullin thei come to that blisfull place,
To whiche to comin God sendin the grace.

The daie gan failin; and the darke night,
That revith bestis from their businesse,
Berafte me my boke for lacke of light,
And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse,
Fulfilled of thought and busie hevinesse,
For bothe I had thyng whiche that I ne wolde,
And eke I ne had that thyng that I wolde.

But, finally, my spirite at the laste,
For werie of my labour all that daie,
Toke rest, that madin me to slepin faste,
And in my slepe I met as that I laie
How Affrikan, right in the self araie
That Scipion hym sawe before that tide,
Was come, and stode right at my bedd'is side.

The werie huntir slepyng in his bedde
The wodde ayen his minde goith anone,
The judge ydremith how his plees be spedde,
The cartir dremith how his cartis gone,
The rich of gold, the knight fight with his fone,
The sicke ymette he drinkith of the tonne,
The lovir mette he hath his ladie wonne.

Can I not saine if that the cause ywere
For I had radde of Affrican beforne
That madin me to mete that he stode there,
But thus said he; Thou hast the so wel borne
In lokyng of myne olde boke all to torne,
Of which Macrobie ne raught not a lite,
That somedele of thy labour would I quite.

Thou Citherea, blisfull ladie swete!
That with thy fire brond dauntist when the lest,
That madist me this swevin for to mete,
Be thou my helpe in this, for thou maist best,
As wisely as I feigh the north northwest
When I began my swevin for to write,
So yeve me might to rime it and endite.

This foresaid Affrikan me hent anone,
And forthe with hym unto a gate ybrought
Right of a parke ywallid with grene stone,
And o'er the gate with lettirs large ywrought
There werin versis writtin, as me thought,
On eithir halfe, of full grete difference,
On which I shall you saie the plain sentence.

Through me men gon into that blisful place
Of hertis hele and dedly woundis cure,
Through me men gone into the well of grace,
There grene and lustie Maie shall er endure;
This is the waie to all gode avinture:
Be glad, thou reader, and thy sorowe' of cast,
All open am I; passe in, and spede the fast.

Through me men gon, then spake that othir side,
Unto the mortall strokis of the spere,
Of whiche Disdain and Daungir is the gide,
There nevir tre shall fruict ne levis here;
This streme you ledith to the sorowfull were
There as the fishe in prison is all drie;
Th' eschewyng is onely the remedie.

These versis of gold and asure writte were,
Of whiche I gan astonied to beholde,
For with that one encresid all my fere,
And with that othir gan my herte to bolde;
That one me het, that othir did me colde:
No wit had I for errour for to chese
To entre' or flie, or me to save or lese.

Right as betwixin adamantis two
Of evin weight a pece of yron set
Ne hath no might to movin to ne fro,
For what that one maie hale that othir let;
So fared I, that I n'ist where me was bet
To entre' or leve, til Affrican my gide
Me hent, and shove in at the gatis wide.

And saied, It standith writtin in thy face
Thyne errour, though thou tell it not to me,
But dred the not to come into this place,
For this writyng is nothyng mente by the,
Ne by none but he Lov'is fervaunt be,
For thou of love hast lost thy tast I gesse,
As sicke man hath of swete and bittirnesse.

But nathèles, although that thou be dull,
That which thou canst not doe yet maiest thou se,
For many a man that maie not stande a pull
Yet liketh it hym at wrestlyng for to be,
And demith whethir he doe bet or he;
And if thou haddist connyng for t' endite
I shall the shewin mattir of to write.

With that my hand in his he toke anon,
Of whiche I comfort caught, and went in fast;
But Lorde! so I was glad and well begon!
For ovir all where I myne eyin cast
Were treis clad with leves that aie shal last,
Eche in his kinde, with colour freshe and grene
As emeraude, that joie it was to sene.

The bildir oke, and eke the hardie ashe,
The pillir elme, the coffir unto caraine,
The boxe pipetre, the holme to whippis lasshe,
The sailing firre, the cypres deth to plaine,
The shotir ewe, the aspe for shaftis plaine,
The' olive of pece, and eke the dronkin vine,
The victor palme, the laurir to divine.

A gardein sawe I full of blosomed bowis
Upon a rivir in a grene mede
There as sweteness evirmore inough is,
With flouris white and blewe, yelowe and rede,
And colde and clere welle stremis nothyng dede,
That swommin full of smale fishis light,
With finnis rede and scalis silvir bright.

On every bough the birdis herd I syng
With voice of angell in their harmonie,
That busied 'hem ther birdis forthe to bryng,
The little pretie conies to ther plaie gan hie,
And furthir all abont I gan espie
The dredfull roe, the buck, the hart, and hind,
Squirils, and bestis small of gentle kind.

Of inſtruments of ſtringis in accorde
Herd I ſo plaie a raviſhyng ſwetneſſe
That God, that makir is of all and lorde,
Ne herd nevir a bettir, as I geſſe,
Therewith a winde, unneth it might be leſſe,
Made in the levis grene a noiſe ſoft
Accordant to the Foulis ſong on loft.

The aire of the place ſo attempre was
That ner was ther grevaunce of hot ne cold,
There was eke every wholſome ſpice and gras,
Ne no man maie there waxin ſike ne old;
Yet was there more joie a thouſande fold
Then I can tell, or evir could or might;
There is evir clere daie and nevir night.

Undir a tre beſide a well I ſeye
Cupide our lorde his arrowes forge and file,
And at his fete his bowe all redie laye,
And well his doughtir temprid all the while
The heddis in the well, and with her wile
She couchid 'hem aftir as thei ſhould ſerve,
Some for to ſlea, and ſome to wound and carve.

Tho was I ware of Pleſance anon right,
And of Arrai, Luſte, Beaute', and Curtiſie,
And of the craft that can yhave the might
To doen by force a wight to doen folie,
Diſfigurid was ſhe, I will not lie,
And by himſelf, undir an oak I geſſe,
Sawe I delite, that ſtode with Gentilneſſe:

Then ſawe I Beautie with a nice atire,
Ard Youth, all full of game and jolite,
Fole Hardineſſe, Flattirie, and Deſire,
Meſſagerie, and Mede, and othir thre,
Ther namis ſhall not here be tolde for me,
And upon pillars grete of jaſpir long
I ſawe a temple' of braſſe iſoundid ſtrong:

And about the temple dauncid alwaie
Women inow, of which ſome there ywere
Faire of 'hemſelf, and ſome of 'hem were gais;
In kirtils all diſheveled went thei there,
That was ther office er fro yere to yere;
And on the temple ſawe I white and faire
Of dovis ſittyng many' a thouſande paire.

Before the temple dore full ſobirlie
Dame Pece yſat, a curtaine in her honde,
And her beſidis wondir diſcretlie
Dame Pacience yſittyng there I fonde,
With face pale, upon an hille of ſonde,
And althir nexte, within and eke without,
Beheſt and Arte, and of ther folke a rout.

Within the temple' of ſighis hote as fire
I herd a ſwough that gan about to ren,
Whiche ſighis were engendrid with deſire
That madin every herte for to bren
Of newe flambe; and well eſpied I then
That all the cauſe of ſorowes that thei drie
Come of the bittir goddis Jelouſie.

The god Priapus ſawe I as I went
Within the temple' in ſoveraine place yſtonde
In ſoche arraie as when the aſſe hym ſhent
With crie by night, and with ſceptre in honde;
Full buſilie men ban aſſaie and ſonde
Upon his hedde to ſet of ſondrie hewe
Garlandis full of freſhe flouris newe:

And in a privie corner in diſport
Found I Venus and her portir Richeſſe,
That was full noble' and hautin of her port;
Darke was that place, but aftirwarde lightneſſe
I ſawe a lite, unnethes it might be leſſe,
And on a bed of golde ſhe laie to reſte
Till that the hote ſonne began to weſte.

Her gildid heris with a goldin threde
Iboundin were, untreſſid as ſhe laie,
And nakid from the breſt unto the hede
Men might her ſe, and, ſothly for to ſaie,
The remenaunt covired well to my paie
Right with a lityl kercheſe of Valence;
There n'as no thickir clothe of no defence.

The place gave a thouſande ſavours ſote,
And Bacchus, god of Wine, ſate her beſide,
And Ceres next, that doeth of hunger bote,
And, as I ſaied, amiddis laie Cypride,
To whom on kneis the yong folkis cride
To be ther helpe: but thus I let her lie,
And farthir in the temple' I gan eſpie,

That in diſpite of Diana the chaſte
Full many a bowe ibroke hing on the wall
Of maidins, ſoche as gone ther tymis waſte
In her ſervice, and paintid ovir all
Of many' a ſtorie', of whiche I touchin ſhall
A fewe, as of Caliſto' and Atalante,
And many' a maide of which the name I want.

Semeramis, Candace', and Hercules,
Biblis, Dido, Thiſbe, and Pyramus,
Triſtram, Iſoude, Paris, and Achilles,
Helaine, Cleopatra, and Troilus,
Scylla, and eke the mother of Romulus;
All theſe were paintid on that othir ſide,
And all ther love, and in what plite thei dide.

When I was comen ayen into the place
That I of ſpake, that was ſote and grene,
Forthe walked I tho my ſelvin to ſolace,
Tho was I ware where there yſate a quene,
That as of light the ſommir ſonne ſhene
Paſſith the ſterre, right ſo ovir meſure
She fairir was then any other creture.

And in a launde, upon a hill of floures,
Was ſet this quene, this noble goddeſſe Nature;
Of braunchis were her hallis and her boures
Iwrought after her croft and her meſure;
Neither n'as Foule that cometh of engendrure
That there ne were ypreſt in her preſence
To take her dome and yeve her audience;

For this was on Sainct Valentin'is daie,
When every Foule comith to cheſe her make
Of every kinde that men ythinkin maie,
And that ſo huge a noiſe gan thei to make
The yerth, the ſe, and tre, and every lake,
So full was, that unnethis there was ſpace
For me to ſtande, ſo full was all the place.

And right as Alaine in The Plaint of Kinde
Deviſeth Nature of ſoche araie and face,
In ſoche araie men mightin her there finde.
This noble empreſſe, full of allè grace,
Bad every Foule takin her owne place
As thei were wont alwaie fro yere to yere
On Sainct Valentines daie to ſtandin there:

That is to saie, the Foulis of ravine
Were highist set, and then the Foulis smale,
That etin as them Nature would encline,
As worme or thing, of which I tell no tale,
And watirfoule sate lowist in the dale,
And Foules that liveth by sede sat on the grene,
And that so sele that wondir was to sene.

There mightin men the roiall egle finde,
That with his sharpè loke persith the son,
And othir eglis of a lowir kinde,
Of whiche that clerkis well devisin con;
There was the tirant with his fethirs don
And grene, I mene the gosshauke, that doth pine
To birdes for his outragious ravine;

The gentle faucon, that with his fete distreineth
The kyng'is hand, the hardie sperhauke eke,
The qual'is foe, the merlion, that peineth
Hymself full oft, the larkè for to seke,
There was the dove, with her eyin so meke,
The jelous swan, ayenst his deth that singeth,
The oule eke, that of deth the bode ybringeth;

The crane, the geant, with his tromp'is sonne,
The thief the chough, and eke the chattring pie,
The scornyng jaie, the ele's foe the heroune,
The false lapwing, alle full of trechirie,
The starling, that the counsaile can bewrie,
The tamè ruddocke, and the cowarde kite,
The cocke, that horiloge is of thropes lite;

The sparow, Venus son, the nightingale,
That clepith forthe the freshè levis newe,
The swalowe, murdrer of the beis smale,
That maken honie of flouris freshe of hewe,
The weddid turtell with his hertè true,
The pecocke with his angell fethirs bright,
The sesaunt, scornir of the cocke by night;

The waker gose, the cuckowe, er unkinde,
The popingeie, full of delicasie,
The drake, destroyir of his ownè kinde,
The storke, the wrekir of advoutèris,
The hote cormèraunt, full of glotonie,
The ravin wise, the crowe, with voice of care,
The throstill olde, and frostie feldèfare.

What should I saie? of Foules of every kind
That in this world have fethirs and stature
Men mightin in that place assemblid finde
Before that noble goddesse of nature,
And eche of them ydid his busie cure
Benignèlie to chese or for to take
By her accorde his formell or his make.

But to the poinct. Nature held on her hond
A formell egle', of shape the gentilleft
That evir she emong her workis sonde,
The moste benigne and eke the godelieft;
In her was every vertue at his rest
So farforthe, that Nature her self had blisse
To loke on her, and oft her becke to kisse.

Nature, the vicare of the' almightie Lorde,
That hote and colde, hevie, light, moiste, and dris,
Hath knit by evin nombir of accorde,
In esie voice began to speke and saie,
Foulis, take hede of my sentence I praie,
And for your ese, in fordring of your nede,
As fast as I maie speke I will me spede.

Ye know well how on S. Valentine's daie,
By my statute and through my govirnaunce,
Ye chese your makes, and aftir flie awaie
With 'hem as I doe pricke you with plesaunce,
But natheleste, as by rightfull ordinaunce,
Maie I not let, for all this worlde to win,
But he that moste worthiest is shall begin.

The tercell egle, as ye knowe full wele,
The Foule roiall, above you' all in degre,
The wise and worthie, secret, true as stele,
The whiche I have formid, as ye maie se,
In every parte as it best likith me,
It nedith not his shape you to devise,
He shall first chese and spekin in his gise.

And after hym by ordir shall ye chese
Aftir your kinde, everiche as you likith,
And as your hap is shall ye win or lese,
But which of you that love most entrikith
God sende hym her that sorest for hym sikith;
And therwithall the tercell gan she call,
And saied, My sonne, the choise is to the fall.

But nathèleste in this condicion
Muste be the choice of everiche that is here,
That she agre to his eleccion,
Who so he be, that should yben her fere;
This is our usage aye fro yere to yere,
And who so maie at this time have his grace
In blisfull tyme he came into this place.

With hed enclined and with full humble chere
This roiall tercell spake, and taried nought,
Unto my soveraine ladie', and not my fere,
I chose and chese with will, and hert, and thought,
The formell on your hand so well iwrought,
Whose I am all, and evir will her serve,
Doe what her luste to doe me live or sterve;

Besechyng her of mercie and of grace,
As she that is my ladie sovèrain,
Or let me die here present in this place,
For certis long maie I not live in pain,
For in my herte is corvin every vain,
Havyng regarde onily to my trouthe:
My dere herte! havith on my wo some routhe.

And if that I be founde to her untrue,
Disobeisaunt, or wilfull negligent,
Avauntour, or in procèsse love anewe,
I praie to you this be my judgèment,
That with these Foulis I be all to rent
That ilkè daie that she me evir finde
To her untrue or in my gilte unkinde.

And sith none lovith her so well as I,
Although she nevir of love me behet,
Then ought she to be mine through her mercie,
For othir bonde can I none on her knet,
For for wele nor wo nevir shall I let
To servin her, how far so that she wende:
Saie what you liste, my tale is at an ende.

Full right as the sote and freshe redde rose newe
Against the sommir sunne ycoloured is,
Right so for shame all waxin gan the hewe
Of this formell when that she herd all this;
Neithir she answerde well ne saied amis,
So sore abashed was she, till that Nature
Saied, Doughtir, drede you not, I you assure,

And othir tercell egle ſpake anon
Of lowir kind, and ſaied that ſhould not be;
I love her bet then ye doe by Sainct John,
Or at the leſt I love as well as ye,
And lengir have ſerved her in my degre,
And if ſhe ſhould have loved for long lovyng
To me alone had be the guerdonyng.

I dare eke ſaie, if ſhe me findin falſe,
Unkinde, jangler, rebell, in any wiſe,
Or jelous, doe me hangin by the halſe;
And but I berin me in her ſerviſe
As well aye as my wit can me ſuffiſe
Fro poinct to poinct, her honour for to ſave,
Take ſhe my life and all the gode I have.

The thirde tercell egle anſwerid tho,
Now, Sirs, ye ſe the lityl leſir here,
For every Foule crieth out to be ago
Forthe with his make or with his lady dere,
And eke Nature her ſelf ne will not here,
For tarying her, not half that I would ſeie,
And but I ſpeke I muſt for ſorowe deie.

Of longe ſervice avaunt I me nothing,
But as poſſible' is me to die to day
For wo as he that hath be languiſhing
'This twenty wintre', and wel it happin may
A man may ſerve bettir and more to pay
In halſe a yere, although it were no more,
Than ſome man doth that hath ſervid ful yore.

I ſay not this by me, for I ne can
Do no ſerviſe that may my lady pleſe,
But I dare ſay I am her trewiſt man,
As to my dome, and fainiſt wolde her pleſe:
At ſhorte wordis, til that dethe me ceſe
I wil be hers whethir I wake or winke,
And trewe in al that herte may bethinke.

Of al my lyfe ſyth that day I was borne
So gentle ple in love or othir thinge
Ne herdin nevir no man me beforne,
Who ſo that had right leſir and conninge
For to reherſe ther chere and ther ſpekynge,
And from the morowe gan this ſpeche laſte
Till downward went the ſonne wondir faſte.

The noiſe of Foulis for to be deliverde
So loude range, Have don and let us wende,
That wel wende I the wode had all to ſhivered:
Come of, they cried; alas! ye wil us ſhende;
Whan ſhal your curſid pleding have an ende?
How ſhulde a judge on cithir partie leve
For ye or nay withoutin any preve?

The goſe, the cuckowe, and the ducke alſo,
So cryid Keke, keke, Cuckow, Queke, queke, hye,
Thorough myne eris the noyſe wente tho;
The goſe ſayd than, Al this n'ys worthe a flye,
But I can ſhape herof a remedye,
And wil yſay my verdite faire and ſwithe
For watir Foule, who ſo be wrothe or blithe.

And I for worme Foule, ſaid the fole cuckow,
For I wil of min owne authorite,
For common ſpede, take on me the charge now
For to deliver us is grete charite,
Ye may abydin a while yet perde.
(Quod the turtel) If that it be your wil
A wight may ſpeke it were as gode be ſtil.

I am a ſede Foule, one the unworthyeſt,
That wot I wel, and the leſt of connynge,
But bettir is that a wight'is tonge reſt
Than entremetin him of ſoche doynge
Of whiche he neithir redin can nor ſinge,
And who ſo' it doth ful foule him ſelf acloyeth,
For *Office uncommittid ofte anoyeth.*

Nature, whiche that alway yhad an ere
To murmure of the leudènesſe behinde,
With ſaconde voice ſaid, Hold your tongis there,
And I ſhal ſone I hope a counſalle finde
You to deliver and fro this noyſe unbynde:
I charge of every flocke ye ſhall one cal
To ſay the verdite of you Foulis all.

Aſſentid were to this concluſyon
The birdis al, and Foulis of ravine
Have choſin firſt by plaine election,
The tercelet of the faucon to define,
Al ther ſentence, and as him luſt to termine,
And to Nature him gan they to preſente,
And ſhe acceptith him with glad entente.

The tercèlet ſayd than in this manere:
Ful hard it were to preve it by reſon
Who lovith beſt this gentil formel here,
For everiche hath ſoche replicacion
That by ſkillis may non be brought adoun;
I cannat ſe that argumentes availe,
Than ſemith it there muſt be a battaile.

Al redy, quod theſe eglès tercelles tho,
Nay, Sirs, (quod he) if that I durſt it ſay
Ye do me wronge, my tale is not ydo;
For, Sirs, ne takith nat a greſe I pray,
It may not be as ye wolde in this way;
Ours is the voice that have the charge in hande,
And to the judg'is dome ye muſt yſtande;

And therfore pece: I ſay as to my wit
Me woldin thinke how that the worthieſt
Of knyghthode, and lengiſt had uſid it,
Moſt of eſtate, of blode the gentilleſt,
Were fittingeſt for her, if that her leſt,
And of theſe thre ſhe wote her ſelfe I trowe
Whiche that he be, for it is light to knowe.

The watir Foulis have ther hedis laide
Togidir, and of ſhorte aviſement
Whan evèriche had his verdite yſaide,
They ſaidin ſothely al by one aſſent
How that the goſe, with the ſaconde gent,
That ſo deſirith to pronounce our nede,
Shal tel our tale, and prayed to God her ſpede.

And for theſe watir Foulis tho began
The goſe to ſpeke, and in her cakelynge
She ſaid, Pece now, take kepe every man,
And herken whiche reſon I ſhal forth bring;
My witte is ſharpe; I love no tarying;
I ſay I rede him, tho he were my brother,
But ſhe wil love him let him love another.

Lo here a parfite reſon of a goſe!
Tho (quod the ſperhauke) nevir mote ſhe the;
Lo ſoche a thing it' is to have a tonge loſe!
Nowe parde fole yet were it bet for the
Have holde thy pece than ſhewde thy nicete;
It lyeth nat in his wit nor in his wil,
Put ſothe is ſaide, *A fole can not be ſtil.*

The laughtir aroſe of gentil Foulis al,
And right anone the ſede Foules choſin had
The turtel trewe, and gan her to 'hem call,
And prayid her to ſay the ſothè ſad
Of this matir, and aſkid whe ſhe rad?
And ſhe anſwered that plainly her entent
She woldè ſhewe, and ſothly what ſhe ment.
Nay, God forbede a lovir ſhuldè chaunge,
The turtel ſaid, and wexte for ſhame al rede;
Though that his lady evirmore be ſtraunge,
Yet let him ſerve her ay tyl he be dede;
Forſothe I ne praiſe not the gos'is rede,
For tho ſhe dyed I wold none othir make;
I wil be hers tyl that the dethe me take.
Wel ybourdid (quod the ducke) by my hat;
That men ſhouldin love alway cauſèleſſe
Who can a reſon finde or wit in that?
Dauncith he mery that is mirthlèſſe?
Who ſhuldin recke of that is rechèleſſe?
Ye queke yet (quod the ducke) ful wel and faire,
There be mo ſterres in the ſkye than a paire.
Nowe fye, churle! (quod the gentil tercèlet)
Out of the donghil came that word aright;
Thou canſt not ſe which thinge is wel beſet;
Thou fareſt by love as owlis do by light,
The day 'hem blindeth, ful wel they ſe by night;
Thy knode is of ſo lowe a wretchidneſſe
That what love is thou canſt not ſe nor geſſe.
Tho gan the cuckow put him forthe in prece
For Foule that etith worme, and ſayid blyve,
So I (quod he) may have my make in pece
I ne retche nought howe longè that ye ſtrive;
Let eche of 'hem be ſoleine al ther lyve:
This is my rede ſens they may nat acorde;
This ſhorte leſſon nedith not recorde.
Ye have the glutton filde inow his paunche,
Then are we wel, ſayid the emerlon,
Thou murdrir of the heiſugge, on the braunche,
That brought the forth, thou moſt rufull glutton,
Live thou ſolein, wormis corrupcion!
For no force is of lacke of thy nature;
Go, leude be thou while that the world may dure!
Nowe pece (quod Nature) I commandin here,
For I have herde al your opinion,
And in effecte yet be we ner the nere;
But, finally, this is my concluſion,
That ſhe her ſelfe ſhal have her election
Of whom her liſt, who ſo be wroth or blithe,
Him that ſhe cheſeth he ſhal her have as ſwithe:
For ſithe it may not here diſcuſſid be
Who loveth her beſt, as ſaid the tercèlet,
Than wol I done this favour to' her, that ſhe
Shal have right him on whom her hert is ſet,
And he her that his hert hath on her knet;
This judge I Nature, for I may not lye,
To none eſtate I have none othir eye.
But as for counſayle for to choſe a make,
Yf I were Reſon, certis than woulde I
Counſailin you the royal tercel take,
As ſayd the tercèlet ful ſkilfully,
As for the gentiliſt and moſt worthy,

Which I have wrought ſo wel to my pleſaunce
That to you it ought ben a ſuffiſaunce.
With dredfull voice the formell her anſwerde;
My rightfull lady, goddeſſe of Nature,
Soth is that I am er undir your yerde,
As is als' evèriche othir creture,
And muſt be yours while that my life may dure,
And therfore grauntith me my firſtè bone,
And myne entent you wol I ſay right ſone.
I graunt it you (quod ſhe.) And right anone
This formel egle ſpake in this degre;
Almighty quene! unto this yere be done
I aſke reſpite for to avyſin me,
And aftir that to have my choyce all fre:
This al and ſome that I wold ſpeke and ſey;
Ye get no more although ye do me dey:
I wol not ſervin Venus ne Cupide
Forſothe as yet by no manir of way.
Nowe ſens it may none othir wayes betide
(Quod Dame Nature), here is no more to ſay;
Than wolde I that theſe Foulis were away
Eche with his make for tarying lengir here,
And ſaid 'hem thus, as ye ſhal aftir here:
To you ſpeke I, ye tercelets (quod Nature),
Bethe of gode herte, and ſervith allè thre,
A yere is not ſo longe for to endure,
And eche of you paine him in his degre
For to do wel, for God wote quit is ſhe
Fro you this yere, what aftir ſo befal;
This entremes is dreſſid for you all.
And whan this werk ybrought was to an ende
To evèry Foule Nature yave his make
By even acorde, and on ther way they wende,
And Lordethe bliſſe and joye which that they make!
For ech gan othir in his wingis take,
And with ther neckis eche gan othir winde,
Thankynge aye the noble goddeſſe of Kinde.
But firſt were choſin Foulis for to ſinge,
As yere by yere was alway ther uſaunce,
To ſinge a roundel at ther departing,
To do to Nature honour and pleſaunce;
The note I trowe ymakid was in Fraunce;
The wordis were ſoche as ye may here find
The nextè vers, as I nowe have in minde,

Qui bien aime tard oublie.

Now welcom ſomir! with thy ſonnis ſoft,
That haſte this wintir wethirs ovirſhake;
Saint Valentine! thou arte full hye on loſte,
Which drivſt away the longe nightis blake,
Thus ſingin ſmale Foulis for thy ſake;
Well havin they cauſe for to gladin ofte
Sens eche of 'hem recovered hath his make,
Ful bliſsful maie they ſing when they awake.
And with the ſhouting when ther ſonge was do
That the Foulis made at ther flight away
I woke, and othir bokis toke me to
To rede upon, and yet I rede alway;
I hope ywis to redin ſo ſome day
That I ſhal metin ſome thinge for to fare
The bet, and thus to rede I n'il not ſpare.

OF THE

CUCKOWE AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

Chaucer dreameth that he heareth the Cuckowe and the Nightingale contend for excellency in singing.

The god of Love, ah, *benedicite!*
Howe mighty and howe gret a lorde is he!
For he can makin of lowe hertis hie,
And of hye lowe and lykè for to die,
And hardè hertis he can makin ſre;

He can makin within a litil ſtounde
Of ſickè folkè whole, and freſhe, and ſounde,
And of the whole he can ymakè ſeke;
He can ybindin and unbindin eke
That he wol have yboundin or unbounde.

To tel his might my wit may not ſuffiſe,
For he can makin of wiſe folke ful nice,
For he may do al that he wol device,
And lithy folkè to diſtroyin vice,
And proudè hertis he can make agriſe.

Shortly, al that evir he wol he may;
Againſt him there dare no wight ſay naye,
For he can glad and greve whom him lykith,
And who that he wol he loweth or ſikith,
And moſt his might he ſhedith er in May;

For every tree gentle hertè ſre,
That with him is or thinkith for to be,
Againſt May now ſhal have ſome ſteringe,
Or to joye or ellis to ſome mourning,
In no ſeſon ſo moche, as thinkith me:

For whan that they may here the birdis ſinge,
And ſe the flouris and the levis ſpringe,
That bringith into ther remembèraunce
A manir eſe ymedlid with grevaunce,
And luſty thoughtis ful of grete longing;

And of that longing comith hevineſſe,
And therof growith oft grete ſikèneſſe,
And for the lacke of that that they deſire;
And thus in May ben hertis ſet on fire,
So that they brennin forth in gret diſtreſſe.

I ſpekè this of feling trewily:
What! tho that I be olde and unluſty
Yet I have felte of the ſickeneſſe through May
Bothe hote and cold, and axis every day,
How ſore iwis there wote no wight but I.

I am ſo ſhakin with the ſevirs white
Of al this May, ne ſlepe I but a lite;
And alſo it is not lyke unto me
That any hertè ſhouldin ſlepy be
In whom that Love his firy darte wol ſmite.

But as I lay this othir night waking
I thought howe lovirs had a tokining,
And amonge 'hem it was a commune tale
That it were gode to here the Nightingale
Moche rathir than the leudè Cuckowe ſinge.

And than I thought anon as it was day
I woldè faine go ſomwhere to aſſay
If that I might a Nightingale yhere,
For yet had I none herde of al that yere,
And it was tho the thirdè night of May.

And right anon as I the day aſpide
No lengir would I in my bedde abide,
But unto a wodde that was me faſt by
I went forthe my ſelf alone boldily,
And helde the way downe by a brokè ſide.

Tyl I came to a launde of white and grene,
So faire an one had I nevir in bene;
The grounde was grene, ypoudrid with daiſye,
The flouris and the grevis alike hie,
Al grene and white, was nothing ellis ſene.

There ſate I downe among the faire flouris,
And ſawe the birdes trippe out of ther bowris
There as they reſtid 'hem had al the night;
They were ſo joyful of the day'is lyght
They began of Maye for to done honouris:

They coudin wel that ſervice al by rote,
And there was many a full lovely note;
Some ſongin loudè as they had yplained,
And ſome in othir manir voice yfained,
And ſome ſongin al out with the ful throte.

They proynid 'hem and madin 'hem right gay,
And daunſidin and leptin on the ſpray,
And evirmore were two and two in fere,
Right ſo as they had choſin 'hem to yere
In Feverere on Saint Valentine's day.

And the rivir whiche that I ſat upon
It madin ſoche a noiſe as it ron,
Accordaunt with the birdis armony,
Me thought that it was the beſt melody
That mightin ben yherde of any mon.

And for delyte, I ne wotte nevir howe,
I fel in ſoche a ſlombre and a ſwowe,
Nat al aſlepe ne fully awaking,
And in that ſwowe me thought I herdè ſinge
The fory birde, I mene the leude Cuckowe,

And that was upon a tre right faſt by;
But who was than evil apaide but I?
Now God (quod I) that dyid on the crois
Yeve ſorowe on the and on thy leude vois!
Ful litil joye have I now of thy crie.

And as I with the Cuckow thus gan chide,
I herdin in the nextè buſh beſide
A Nyghtingale ſo luſtily yſinge,
That with her clerè voice ſhe madin ringe,
Echoing thorough al the grene wode wide.

Ah! gode ſwete Nightingale! (quod I) then,
A litil haſt thou ben to longè hen,
For here hath ben the leude ſory Cuckow,
And ſongin ſongis rathir than haſt thou;
I pray to God that evil fire her bren!

But now I wol you tel a wondre thing;
As longe as I ylay in that ſwouning,
Me thought I wiſt what that the birdis ment,
And what they ſayd, and what was ther entent,
And of ther ſpeche I had full gode knowing.

There herdin I the Nightingale yſay,
Now, gode Cuckow! goith ſome where awaye,
And let us that can ſingin dwellin here,
For every wight eſchevith the to here,
Thy ſongis ben ſo elenge, in gode fay.

What! (quod ſhe) what may the aylin as nowe?
It thinkith me I ſinge as wel as thou,
For my ſongè is both true and eke plaine,
And though I can not crakil ſo in vaine
As thou doſt in thy throte, I wot ner how.

And every wight may undirſtandin me;
But, Nightingale, ſo may they not done the,
For thou haſt many a nice queintè crie;
I have the herdè ſaine Ocy, ocy:
Howe might I knowin what that ſhould ybe?

Ah, fole! (quod ſhe) woſt thou not what it is?
Whan that I ſay Ocy, ocy, ywys
Than menin I that I would wondre faine
That al they werin ſhamfully yſlaine
That menin ought againiſt love amis;

And alſo' I would that al tho had the dede
That thinkin not in love ther life to lede,
For who ſo wol not the god of Love ſerve
I dare wel ſay he is worthy to ſterve,
And for that ſtil Ocy, ocy, I grede.

Eye! (quod the Cuckow) this is a queint lawe,
That every wight ſhal love or be to draw;
But I forſakin al ſoche company,
For myne entent ne is not for to die,
Ne ner while I live on Love's yoke to draw;

For lovirs ben the folke that ben on lyve
That moſt diſeſe yhave and moſt unthrive,
And moſt endurin ſorow, wo, and care,
And that the left yſelin of welfare;
What nedith it ayeniſt trouth to ſtrive?

What! (quod ſhe) thou art alle out of thy minde;
How might thou in thy churlineſſe yfynde
To ſpeke of Lov'is ſervauntes in this wiſe?
For in this world is none ſo gode ſervice
To every wight that gentle is of kinde;

For therof truly comith al godeneſſe,
Therof al honour and al gentilneſſe,
Thereof worſhip, eſe, and al hert'is luſt,
And parfite joye and ful affurid truſt,
And jolytie, and pleſaunce, and freſheneſſe,

And lowlyhed, largeſſe, and curtifye,
And ſemèlyhed, and trew company,
And drede of ſhamè for to done amyſs,
For he that truily Lov'is ſervaunt is
Were lothir to be ſhamid than to die.

And that thys is the ſothe whiche that I ſey
In that beleve I wil bothe live and dey;
And, Cuckow, ſo I rede thou do ywys.
Than (quod he) let me nevir havin bliſſe
Yf evir I to that counſaile obey.

Nyghtingale, thou yſpekiſt wondre faire,
But for al that is the ſoth contrayre,
For Love ne is in yongè folke but rage,
And is in oldè folke a grete dotage;
Who moſt it uſith he moſt ſhal enpaire;

For therof commeth diſeſe and hevineſſe,
So ſorow', and care, and many' a grete ſikeneſſe,
Deſpite, debate, and angre, and envy,
Depraving, ſhame, untruſt, and jelouſie,
Pride, miſcheſe, povertie, and wodèneſſe.

Loving is aye an office of diſpaire,
And one thing is therin that is not faire,
For who that getteth of Love a litil bliſſe,
But if he be alwaie therewith, iwis
He maie full ſone of age yhave his haire:

And, Nightingalè, therefore held the nie,
For leve me well, for all thy queintè crie,
If thou be ferre or longè fro thy make
Thou ſhalt be as othir that ben forſake,
And then thou ſhalt yhotin as do I.

Fie! (quod ſhe) on thy namè and on the,
The god of Love ne let the nevir the,
For thou art worſe a thouſandfolde than wode,
For many' one is full worthie and full gode
That had be naught ne haddin Love ibee;

For evirmore Love his ſervauntes amendeth,
And from all evill tachis 'hem defendeth,
And makith 'hem to brenne right in a fire
In trouthè and in worſhipfull deſire,
And when him likith joy inough 'hem ſendeth.

Thou, Nightingalè, he ſayid, be ſtill,
For Love have no reſon but it is will,
For oft tymis untrue folke he eſith
And true folke ſo bittirly diſpleſith
That for defaute of courage he let 'hem ſpill.

Then toke I of the Nightingalè kepe
How that ſhe caſt a ſigh out of her depe,
And ſaied, Alas that evir I was bore!
I can for tene not ſaie one wordè more;
And right with that worde ſhe braſt out to wepe.

Alas! (quod ſhe) my hertè woll to breke,
To herin thus this leudè birdè ſpeke
Of Love, and of his worſhipfull ſervice;
Now god of Love, thou helpe me in ſome wiſe
That I maie on this Cuckowe ben awreke.

Me thoughtin then that he ſterte up anon,
And glad was I tho that he was agon,
And evirmore the Cuckowe as he flaie
Yſayid, Farewell, farewell, popingaie,
As though he had yſcornid me alone.

And then ycame the Nightingale to me,
And ſayid, Frende, forſoth I thankè the
That thou haſt likid me for to reſcowe,
And one avowe to Love ymake I now,
That all this Maie I woll thy ſingir be.

I thankid her, and was right well apaied.
Ye, (quod ſhe) and ne be thou not diſmaied
Tho thou have herd the Cuckow erſt than me,
For if I live it ſhall amendid be
The nextè Maie, if I be not affraied.

And one thing I woll redin the alſo,
Ne leve thou not the Cuckow ne' his loves ſo,
For all that he hath ſaied is ſtrong leſyng.
Naie, (quod I) therto ſhall nothyng me bryng
For love, and it hath do me mochil wo.

Ye, hath it? Uſe (quod ſhe) this medicine,
Every daie this Maie or that thou dine
Go lokin upon the freſhe daiſie,
And though thou be for wo in poinct to die
That ſhall full gretly leſſen the of thy pine.

And loke alwaie that thou be gode and true,
And I woll ſing one of the ſongis newe
For love of the, as loude as I maie crie;
And then ſhe began this ſongè full hie,
I ſhrewe all 'hem that ben of love untrue.

And when ſhe had yſong it to the ende,
Now farewell, (quod ſhe) for I motè wende,
And god of Love, that can right well and may,
As mochil joyè ſendè the this daie
As any yet lovir he ever ſende.

Thus taketh the Nightingale her leve of me,
I praie to God alwaie with her to be,
And joye of love he ſende her evirmore,
And ſhilde us fro the Cuckowe and his lore!
For there is not ſo falſe a birde as he.

Forthe ſhe yflewe the gentill Nightingale
To all the birdis that were in that dale,
And gate 'hem all into a place in fere,
And beſoughtin 'hem that they wouldin here
Her diſeſe; and thus ſhe began her tale:

The Cuckowe, well it is not for to hide
How the Cuckowe and I faſt havin chide
Evir ſithin that it ywas daie light;
I praie you all that ye doin me right
Of that foule, and falſe, and unkindè bride.

Then ſpeke o birde for all by one aſſent;
This mattir aſkith gode aviſement,
For we ben allè birdis here in fere,
And ſothe it is the Cuckowe is not here,
And therefore we woll have a parliment;

And thereat ſhall the egle be our lorde,
And othir peris that ben of recorde,
And the Cuckowe ſhall be aftir yſent,
And there ſhall be yevin the judgement,
Or els we ſhall finally make accorde.

And this ſhall be ydone withoutin naie
The morowe aftir Sainct Valentine's daie,
Undir a maple that is faire and grene,
Before the chambir windowe of the quene
At Wodeſtocke upon the grenè laie.

She thankid 'hem, and then her levè toke,
And flew into an hauthorne by that broke,
And there ſhe ſate and ſong upon that tre,
For terme of life love hath withholde me,
So loude, that I with that ſong awoke.

O leudè boke! with thy foule rudèneſſe,
Sithe thou haſt neithir beaute ne' eloquence
Who hath the cauſed or yeve the hardineſſe
For to appere in my ladie's preſence?
I' am ful ſikir thou knowiſt her benevo'lence,
Full agreable to all her abiyng,
For of all gode ſhe is the beſt livyng,

Alas! that thou ne haddiſt worthineſſe
To ſhewin to her ſome pleſaunt ſentence,
Sith that ſhe hath thorough her gentilleſſe
Acceptid the ſervaunt to her digne reve'rence.
O! me repéntith that I ne' had ſcience
And leſir als to make the more floriſhyng,
For of all gode ſhe is the beſt livyng.

Beſeche her mekely with all lowlineſſe,
Though that I be ſerre from her in abſence,
To thinke on my trouth to' her and ſtedfaſtneſſe,
And to' abridge of my ſorowes the viollence
Which cauſed is, wherof knowith your ſapience,
She like emong to notifie me' her likyng,
For of all gode ſhe is the beſt livyng.

L'ENNOY.

Aurore of gladneſſe, daie of luſtineſſe,
Lucerne anight with hevenlie influence
Illumined, rote of beautie and godeneſſe,
Suſpiris, whiche I effunde in ſilence,
Of grace I beſeche aledge let your writyng,
Now of all gode ſith ye beſt livyng.

HEREAFTER FOLOWETH

HOW PYTE IS DEDE,

AND BURIED IN GENTYLE HERTE.

Pyte, that I have ſought ſo yore ago
With hertè ſore, and full of beſy paine,
That in this worlde was nevir wight ſo wò
Withoutin dethe, and yf I ſhal nat faine
My purpoſe was to Pitie to complaine
Upon the crueltie and tyrannye
Of Love, that for my trouth doth me to die.

And whan that I by length of certaine yeres
Had evir in one ſought a time to ſpeke,
To Pite ran I all beſpreint with teres
To prayin her on Cruelte me' a-wreke;
But or I might with any worde out breke,
Or tel her any of my painis ſmerte,
I found her ded and buried in an herte.

A downe I fel whan that I ſaw the herſe
Ded as a ſtone while that the ſwonne me laſte,
But up I roſe with coloure ful diverſe,
And pitouſly on her myne eyen I caſt,
And nerir the corſe I gan preſin faſt,
And for the ſoule I ſhope me for to pray;
I was but lorne; there was no more to ſay.

Thus am I ſlaine ſith that Pite is ded;
Alas that day that evir it ſhulde fal!
What manir man dare nowe hold up his hed,
To whom ſhal now any ſoro'wfull hert call,
Nowe Cruelte hath caſt to ſle us al,
In ydle hope folke redèleſſe of paine,
Sith ſhe is ded, to whom ſhal we complaine?

But yet encreſith me this wondir newe,
That no wight wote that ſhe is ded but I,
So many men as in her tyme her knewe,
And yet ſhe dyid all ſo ſodainly,
For I have ſought her er full beſily,
Sithins that I had firſtè witte or mind,
But ſhe was ded er that I coude her find.

Aboute her herſe there ſtodin luſtily,
Withoutin any me as thoughtin me,
Bountie, perfitely well armed and richely,
And freſhe Beaute, and Luſt, and Jolite,
Aſſurid Manir, Youthe, and Honeſte,
Wiſdome, Eſtate, with Drede and Govirnaunce,
Confedrid both by bonde and aliaunce.

A complainte had I writin in my honde
To have yput to Pyte as a byl,
But I there al this company yſonde
That rathir wouldin all my cauſè ſpill
Then do me help, I held my plaintè ſtill,
For to thoſe folke withoutin any faile
Without Pite there maie no bill availe.

Then leave all vertues ſave onely Pitie,
Keping the corſe, as ye have herd me ſaine,
Confedrid by bonde unto Crueltie,
And be aſſentid when I ſhall be ſlaine,
And I have put my compleinte up againe,
For to my foes my bill I dare not ſhewe
The' effect, which ſayith thus in wordis fewe:

Humbliſt of herte, hyiſt of reverence,
Flowir benigne, coroune of vertues alle!
Shewith unto your roiall excellence
Your ſervaunt, if I durſtin me ſo call,
His mortall harme in which he is ifall,
And nought all onely for his wofull fare
But for your renome, as he ſhall declare.

It ſtandeth thus; that your contary' Crueltie
Allyid is ayenſt your regalie,
Undir colour of womanly beautie,
For men ſhouldin not knowe her tyrannie,
With Bountie, Gentilleſſe, and Curteſie,
And hath deprivid you thus of your place,
That is hie Beaute' apertenant to your grace:

For kindly by your heritage and right
Ye be annexid evir to Bountie,
And verily ye ought to doe your might
To helpin Trouthe in his adverſitie;
Ye be alſo the coroune of Beautie,
And certis if that ye want in theſe twaine
The worlde is lore; there is no more to ſaine.
Eke what availeth manir and gentileſſe
Withoutin you, o moſt benigne creture!
Shall Crueltie ybe your governeſſe?
Alas! what hertè maie it long endure?
Wherefore but ye rathir ytakin cure
To brekin that perillous aliaunce
Ye ſleen 'hem that ben in your obeiſaunce.
And furthir ovir, if ye ſuffir this
All your renome is ſordoe in a throwe,
There ſhall no man ywete what pitie is;
Alas that your renome is fall ſo lowe!
Ye be' alſo fro your heritage ithrowe
By Crueltie, that occupieth your place,
And we diſpairid that ſekin your grace.
Have mercie on me, thou herenus quene,
That you have ſought ſo tendirly and ſore,
O let ſome ſtreame of light on me be ſene,
That love and drede you er longir the more!
For, ſothily to ſaine, I bere ſo ſore;
And though I be not connyng for to plaine
For God'is love have mercie on my paine.
My paine is this, that what ſo I deſire
That have I not, ne nothyng like thereto,
And evir ſetteth deſire mine herte on fire;
Eke on that othir ſide, where that I go
What manir thing that may encreſe my wo
That have I redy unſought every where;
Me lackith but my deth and then my bere.
What nedith to ſhewe percel of my paine,
Sith every wo that herte maie bethinke
I ſuffir, and yet dare not to you plaine?
For well I wote though that I wake or winke
Ye recke not whethir that I flete or ſinke;
And natheleſſe yet my trouth I ſhall ſuſteine
Unto my deth, and that ſhall well be ſene:
This is to ſaine, that I will be yours ever,
Though ye me ſlea by Crueltie your ſo,
Algate my ſpirite ſhall nevir diſcevir
Fro your ſervice for any paine or wo,
Sith ye be dedde, alas that it is ſo!
Thus for your deth I maie wepin and plain
With hertè ſore and full of beſie paiu.

Theſe Verſes next folowing were compiled by Geoff. Chaucer, and in the writen copies folowe at the ende of The Complainte of Pite.

THE longè nyghtis, when every creture
Shuld have ther reſt in ſomwhat as by kind,
Or ellis ne may ther life not long endure,
It fallith moſte into my woful minde
How I ſo farre have brought my ſelf behind,
That ſafe the deth ther may nothing me liſſe,
So diſpairid I am from allè bliſſe.

This ſame thought me laſtith til the morow,
And from the morowe forth til it be eve;
There nedith me no care for to borow.
For both I have gode laiſir and gode leve;
There is no wight that will my wo byreve,
To wepe enough and wailin all my fyll;
The forè ſparke of peine now doth me ſpil.

This Love, that hath me ſet in ſoche a place
That my deſire he wil nevir fulfyl,
For neithir Pite, Mercy, neithir Grace.
Can I not finde, and yet my wofull herte
For to be dede I can it not arace,
The more I love the more ſhe doth me ſmerte,
Thorowe whiche I ſe withoute remedie
That from the deth I may no wiſe aſterte.

Now ſothly what ſhe hight I wol reherſe;
Her name is Bountie, ſet in womanhed,
Sadnes in youth, and beautie pridèleſſe,
And pleſaunce undir govirnaunce and drede,
And her ſurname is eke faire Ruthèleſſe,
The wifè knit unto gode avinture,
That for I love her ſhe ſleth me giltleſſe;
Her love I beſt, and ſhall while I may dure;

Bett than my ſelfe a hundrid thouſand dele,
Than al this world's richis or creture;
Now hath not Love me beſtowid wel,
To lovin there I nevir ſhal have parte?
Alas, right thus is turnid me the whele!
Thus am I ſlaine with Lov'is furious darte?
I can but love her beſt my ſwetè ſo,
Love hath me taught no morè of his arte
But ſervin alwaye and ſtint for no wo.

Within my trewè carefull herte ther is
So mochil wo and eke ſo litil bliſſe
That wo is me that evir I was bore!
For al that thinge which I deſire I miſſe,
And al that evir I wolde not iwis
That finde I redy to me evirmore;
And of all this I n'ot to whom me plaine,
For ſhe that might me out of this ybring
Ne rechith nought whethir I wepe or ſing,
So litil routh hath ſhe upon my paine!

Alas! whan ſlepinge tyme is then I wake,
Whan I ſhuld daunce for fere lo than I quake;
This hevy life I lede, lo! for your ſake,
Though ye therof in no wiſe hedè take,
Myn hert'is lady and whole my live's quene
For truly durſt I ſay as that I ſele
Me ſemith that your ſwetè herte of ſtele
Is whettid now againiſt me to kene.

My derè herte and beſt belovid ſo!
Why lykith you to do me al this wo?
What have I don that grevith you, or ſaide?
But for I ſerve and love you and no mo,
And whileſt I live I wil evir do ſo,
And therfore, ſwete! ne bethe not il apaide;
For ſo gode and ſo faire as that ye be
It wer a right gret wondir but ye had
Of al ſervauntis both of gode and badde,
And beſt worthy of al them I am he.

But nevir the leſſe, my righte lady ſwete!
Though that I be unkonninge and unmete
To ſerve as I coud beſt aye your highnes,
Yet is ther none fainir, that would I hete,
Than I to do you eſe or ellis bete,
What ſo I wiſt that were to your highnes;
And had I might as gode as I have wil,
Than ſhould ye fele wher it were ſo or none,
For in this world livinge than is ther none
That fainir wolde your hert'is wil fulfil.

For both I love and eke drede you ſo ſore,
And algates mote and have don you ful yore,
That bettir loved is none ne nevir ſhal,
And yet I would beſeche you of no more
But lovith wel, and be not wroth therſore,
And let me ſerve you forth, lo! this is al;
For I am nought ſo hardy ne ſo wode
For to deſire that ye ſhould lovin me,
For wel I wotte, alas! that may not be,
I am ſo litil worthy' and ye ſo gode,
For ye be one the worthyiſt on live,
And I the moſt unlikely for to thrive.

Yet for al this wetith ye ful righte wel
That ye ne ſhould me from your ſervyce drive,
That I ne wil aye with my witis five
Serve you truly what wo ſo that I feſe,
For I am ſet ſo hy upon your whele
That though ye nevir wil upon me rew
I muſt you love, and bene evir as trewe
As any man ycan or maye on live.

But the more that I love you, godely ſre!
The laſſe finde I that ye lovin me;
Alas! whan ſhal that hardè wit amende?
Wher is now al your womanly pite,
Your gentilnes and your debonairte?
Wil ye nothinge therof upon me ſpend,
And ſo whole, ſwete! as I am youris all,
And ſo grete wil as I have to you ſerve?
Now certis and ye let me thus yſterve
Yet have ye wonnin therupon but ſmall,

For at my knowing I do nothing why:
And thus I wil beſeche you hertily,
That if evir ye finde whilis ye live
A truir ſervaunte to you than am I,
Levith than, and ſleith me hardily,
And I my deth to you wil al forgive;
And yf ye finde no trewir verily,
Wollin ye ſuffir than that I thus ſpil,
And for no manir gilt but my gode will?
As gode were than untrue as true to be.

GODE COUNSAILE OF CHAUCER.

Flie fro the preef and dwell with ſothfaſtneſſe;
Suffiſe unto thy gode though it be ſmall,
For horde hath hate, and climbyng tikilneſſe,
Prece hath envie, and wele is blent oer all;
Savour no more than the behoven ſhall;
Rede well thy ſelf, that othir folke canſt rede,
And trouthe the ſhall delivir it' is no drede.

Paine the not eche crokid to redreſſe
In truſt of her that tourneth as a balle;
Grete reſt ſtandith in litil buſineſſe;
Beware alſo to ſpurne again a nalle;
Strive not as doith a crocke with a walle;
Demith thy ſelf that demiſt othir's dede,
And trouthe the ſhall deliver it 'is no drede.

That the is ſent receve in buxomeneſſe;
The wraſtlyng of this worlde aſkith a fall;
Here is no home, here is but wildirneſſe;
Forthe pilgrim, forthe o beſt out of thy ſtall;
Loke up on high, and thanke thy God of all;
Weivith thy luſte and let thy ghoſt the lede,
And trouthe the ſhall delivir it' is no drede.

CHAUCER'S A, B, C.

CALLED LA PRIERE DE NOSTRE DAME.

Chaucer's A, B, C, called La Priere de noſtre Dame, made, as ſome ſay, at the requeſt of Blanch Dacheſſe of Lancaſter, as a praier for her private uſe, being a woman in her religion very devout.

A.

Almightie and allmerciable Quene!
To whom all this world fleith for ſoccour,
To have releſe of ſinne, of ſorow, of tene,
Glorious Virgine! of all flouris flour,
To the I fle, confoundid in errour;
Helpe and releve, almightie debonaire!
Have mercy of mine perillous langour,
Venquiſt me hath my cruill adverſaire.

B.

Bountie ſo fixe hath in my hert his tent,
That well I wote thou will my ſuccour be;
Thou canſt not warnin that with gode entent
Axith thyne helpe, thine hert is aye ſo fre,
Thou art largeſſe of plaine felicite,
Havin and refute of quiete and reſt;
Lo how that thevis ſevin chaſin me;
Helpe, Ladie bright! or that mine ſhip to breſt.

C.

Comfort is none but in you, Lady dere!
For lo! mine ſinne and mine confuſioun,
Which ought not in thin preſence for to' apere,
Han taken on me a grevous actioun,
Of veray right and diſperatioun,
And as by right they mightin well ſuſtene
That I were worthy mine damnatioun,
Ne were it of thy mercy, bliſsfull Quene!

D.

Dout is there none, o Quene of miſe'ricord!
That thou n'art cauſe of grace and merey here,
God vouchideſafe through the with us to' accord;
For certis, Chriſt'is bliſsfull modir dere!
Were now the bow ybent in ſwiche manere
As it was firſt of juſtice and of ire,
The rightfull God would of no mercy here;
But through the han we grace as we deſire.

E.

Ever' hath mine hope of refute in the be,
For here beforne full oft in many' a wiſe
Unto mercy haſt thou recevid me,
But mercy, Lady! at the gret aſſiſe,
When we ſhall come before the High Juſtiſe,
So litil freut ſhall then in me ben found
That but thou or that day correctin me
Of very right mine werke will me confound.

F.

Flying I fle for ſuccour to thine tent,
Me for to hide fro tempeſt full of drede,
Beſeking you that ye you not abſent,
Though I be wicke; o help yet at this nede!
All have I ben a beſt in wit and dede,
Yet, Lady! thou me cloſe with thine owne grace;
Thine enemie and mine (Lady, take hede)
Unto mine deth in point is me to chaſe.

G.

Gracious maid and modir! which that never
Were bittir nor in erth nor in the ſe,
But full of ſweteneſſe and of mercy ever,
Helpe, that mine Fadir be not wroth with me

Speke thou, for I ne dare him not yſe:
So have I done in erth, alas the while!
That certis but if thou mine ſuccour be
To ſinke eterne he will mine ghoſt exile.

H.

He vouchideſafe, tell him, as was his will,
Become a man as for our alliaunce,
And with his blode he wrote that bliſsful bill
Upon the croſſe as generall acquitaunce
To every penitent in full cryaunce;
And therefore, Lady bright! thou for us prey,
Then ſhalt thou ſtentin allè his grevaunce,
And maken our foe to faylin of his prey.

I.

I wotè well thou wilt ben our ſuccour,
Thou art ſo full of bountie in certaine,
For when a ſoulè fallith in errour
Thine pitie goeth and halith him againe,
Then makiſt thou his peèe with his Soverain,
And bringiſt him out of the crokid ſtrete:
Whoſo the lovith ſhall not love in vaine,
That ſhall he find as he the life ſhall lete.

K.

Kalendiris enluminid ben they
That in this world ben lightid with thine name,
And who ſo goith with the the right wey
Him dar not dredin in ſoule to ben lame.
Now Quene of comfort! ſith thou art the ſame
To whom I ſechin for my medicine,
Let not mine ſo no more mine wound entame,
Mine hele into thine hond all I reſine.

L.

Lady! thine ſorrow can I not portrey
Undir the croſſe, ne his grevous pennaunce;
But for your bothis peine I you do prey
Let not our aldir ſo make his boſtaunce
That he hath in his leſtis, with miſchaunce!
Convict that that ye both han bought ſo dere:
As I ſaid erſt, thou ground of all ſubſtaunce!
Continue' on us thin pitous eyin clere.

M.

Moyſes, that ſaw the boſh of flambis rede
Brenning, of which then nevir a ſticke brend,
Was ſigne of thine unwemmid maidinhede;
Thou art the boſh on which there can deſcend
The Holy Ghoſt, the which that Moyſes wend
Had ben on fire; and this was in figure;
Now Lady! fro the firè us defend
Which that in hell eternally ſhall dure.

N.

Noble Princeſſe! that nevir haddiſt pere,
Certis if any comfort in us be
That commith of the, Chriſtis modir dere!
We han none othir melodie ne gle
Us to rejoyce in our adverſite,
Ne advocat that will and dare ſo prey
For us, and that for as lite hire as ye,
That helpin for an Ave'mary or twey.

O.

O very light of eyin tho ben blind!
O very luſt of labour and diſtreſſe!
O treſorere of bountie to mankind!
The whom God cheſe to moder for humbleſſe,
From his ancille he made the maiſtèreſſe
Of heven and erth, our bill up for to bede,
This world awatith ay on thine godenes,
For thou ne failed'eſt nevir wight at nede.

P.

Purpoſe I have ſometime for to enquere
Wherefore and why the Holy Ghoſt the ſought;
When Gabriel's voice come to thine ere
He not to werre us ſwich a wondir wrought,
But for to ſave us that he ſithin bought;
Then nedith us no wepon us to ſave,
But onely there we did not as us ought
Do penitence, and mercy aſke and have.

Q.

Quene of comfort! right when I me bethinke
That I agiltid have both him and the,
And that mine ſoule is worthy for to ſinke,
Alas! I caitiſe, whedir ſhall I fle?
Who ſhall unto thine ſonne mine menè be?
Who but thine ſelfe, that art of pitie well?
Thou haſt more routh on our adverſite
Than in this world might any tonguè tell.

R.

Redreſſe me, modir! and eke me chaſtiſe,
For certainly my Fadir's chaſtiſing
Ne dare I not abidin in no wiſe,
So hidèous is his full reckining.
Modir! of whom our joy began to ſpring;
Be ye mine judge and eke my ſoul'is lech,
For ay in you is pitie abounding
To each that will of pity you beſech.

S.

Soth is that he ne grauntith no pite
Withoutin the, for God of his godeneſſe
Forgivith none but it like unto the:
He hath the made vicaire and maiſtèreſſe
Of all this world, and eke govirneréſſe
Of hevin, and repreſſith his juſtiſe
Aftir thine will, and therefore in witneſſe
He hath the crownid in ſo royall wiſe.

T.

Temple devout! ther God cheſe his wonning,
Fro which theſe miſbeleved deprivid ben,
To you mine ſoulè penitent I bring;
Receve me, for I can no ferthir fleen.
With thornis venemous, o hevin Quene!
For which the erth accurſid was full yore,
I am ſo woundid, as ye may well ſene,
That I am loſt almoſt, it ſmert ſo ſore.

V.

Virgine! that art ſo noble of apparaile,
That lediſt us into the highè toure
Of Paradiſe, thou me wiſe and counſaile
How I may have thy grace and thy ſuccour,
All have I ben in filth and in errour:
Lady! on that countrey thou me adjourne
That clepid is thine bench of freſhè flour,
There as that mercy evir ſhall ſojourne.

X.

Xpes thine ſonne, that in this world alight
Upon a croſſe to ſuffir his paſſioun,
And ſuffred eke that Longeus his hert pight,
And made his hert'is blodè renne adoun,
And all this was for my ſalvatioun;
And I to him am fals and eke unkind,

And yet he will not mine dampnatioun;
This thanke I you, ſuccour of all mankind!

Y.

Yſaac was figure of his deth certaine,
That ſo ferreforth his fadir would obey
That him ne rought nothing for to be ſlaine;
Right ſo thy ſonnè liſt a lambe to dey:
Now Lady full of mercy! I you prey,
Sith he his mercy ſurid me ſo large,
Be ye not ſcant, for all we ſing or ſay,
That ye ben fro vengeaunce alway our targe.

Z.

Zacharie you clepith the opin well
That wiſht his ſinfull ſoule out of his guilt,
Therefore this leſſoun out I will to tell,
That n'ere thine tendir hert we werin ſpilt.
Now Lady bright! ſith that thou canſt and wilt,
Ben to the ſede of Adam merciable;
Bring us unto that paleis that is built
To penitents, that ben to mercie able.

OF QUEENE

ANNELIDA AND FALSE ARCITE.

Arcite, a Theban knight, forſaketh Queen Annelida, who loved him entirely, and taketh a new lady, whereupon Annelida maketh this great complaint.

O THOU fiers god of Armis, Mars the Rede,
That in thy froſtie countrey callid Thrace
Within thy griſly templis full of drede
Honourid art as patrone of that place,
With the Bellona, Pallas full of grace,
Be preſent, and my ſong continue' and gie;
At my beginnyng thus to the I crie.

For it full depe is ſonkin in mynde
With pitous herte in Engliſhe to endite
This olde ſtorie, in Latine whiche I finde,
Of Quene Annelida and falſe Arcite,
That elde, whiche all thingis can frete and bite,
And it hath fretin many' a noble ſtorie,
Hath nigh devourid out of our memorie.

Be favourable' eke thou Polymnia,
On Parnaſſus that with thy ſuſtirs glade
By Helicon, and not ferre from Cirrha,
Singiſt with voice memoriall in the ſhade,
Undir the laurir, which that maie not fade,
And doe that I my ſhip to havin winne:
Firſt followe' I Stace, and aftir him Corinne.

Jamque domos patrias, Scythica poſt aſpera gentis
Prælia, laurigero ſubeuntem Theſea curru
Lætifici plauſus, miſſuſque ad ſidera vulgi, &c.

When Theſeus with warris long and grete
The aſpre folke of Scythe hath ovircome,
The laurir crounid, in his chaire golde bete
Home to his countre houſis is icome,
For whiche the peple blisfull all and ſome
So cridin that to the ſterris it went,
And hym to honourin did all ther entent.

Before this duke in ſigne of victorie
The trompis come, and in his banir large
The' image of Mars; and in token' of glorie
Men mightin ſe of treſure many' a charge,
Many' a bright helme, and many' a ſpere and targe,
Many' a freſhe knight, and many' a blisfull rout
On horſe and fote, in all the field about.

Hyppolyta his wife, the hardie Queene
Of Scythia, that he conquerid had,
With Emelie her youngè ſuſtir ſhene,
Faire in a chare of golde he with him lad,
That al the ground about her chare ſhe ſprad
With brightneſſe of the beautie in her face,
Fulfillid all of largeſſe and of grace.

With his triumph and laurir corouned thus
In all the floure of Fortun'is yevyng
Lete I this noble prince, this Theſeus,
Toward Athenis in his waie ridyng,
And fonde I woll in ſhortly for to bryng
The ſlie waie of that I began to write
Of Quene Annelida and falſe Arcite.

Mars, that through his furious courſe of ire,
The oldè wrathe of Juno to fulfill,
Hath ſet the peplis hertis bothe on fire
Of Thebes and Grece everich othir to kill
With blodie ſperis, reſtid nevir ſtill,
But throng now here now there emong 'hem both,
That everiche othir ſlue, ſo were thei wroth:

For when Amphiorax and Tydeus,
Hippomedon and Parthenope' alſo
Were dedde, and ſlain was the proude Capaneus,

And when the wretchid Thebans brethrin two
Were ſlain, and Kyng Adraſtus home ago,
So deſolate ſtode Thebis and ſo bare
That no wight could remedie of his care.
And when that the old Creon gan eſpie
How that the blode roiall was brought adoun
He helde the cite by his tyrannie,
And did the gentils of that regioun
To ben his frendis and dwell in the toun;
So what for love of him, and what for awe
The noble folke were to the toune idrawe.
Emong all theſe Annelida the Quene
Of Ermonie was in that toune dwellyng,
That fairir ferre was than the ſonnè ſhene;
Throughout the worlde ſo gan her name to ſpryng,
That her to ſe had every wight likyng,
For as of trouthe ne is there none her liche
Of all the women in this worldè riche.
Yong was this quene, of twentie yeris olde,
Of middle ſtature, and of ſoche faireneſſe
That Nature had a joye her to beholde;
And for to ſpekin of her ſtedfaſtneſſe,
She paſſid hath Penelope' and Lucreſſe;
And, ſhortlie, if ſhe ſhall ben comprehended,
In her there mightin nothyng ben amended.
This Theban knight Arcite eke, ſothe to ſaine,
Was yong, and therwithal a luſtie knight,
But he was double' in love and nothing plaine,
And ſubtil in that crafte ovre' any wight,
And with his conayng wan this ladie bright,
For ſo ſerforthe he gan her trouth aſſure
That ſhe hym truſtith o'er any creture.
What ſhould I ſaine? ſhe lovith Arcite ſo
That when that he was abſent any throwe
Anone her thought her hertè braſt a two,
For in her ſight to her he bare hym lowe,
So that ſhe wende have all his herte iknowe;
But he was falſe, it n'as but fainid chere,
As nedith not ſoche craftis men to lere.
But nerthèleſſe full mikill buſineſſe
Had he er that he might his ladie winne,
And ſwore that he would dyin for diſtreſſe
Or from his witte he ſayid he would twinne;
Alas the while! for it was routhe and ſinne
That ſhe upon his ſorowis would rue;
But *Nothing thinkith the falſe as doth the trew.*
Her fredome found Arcite in ſoche manere
That al was his that ſhe hath, moche or lite,
Ne to no manir creturè made ſhe chere
Furthir then as it likid to Arcite;
Ther was no lack with which he might her wite;
She was ſo ſerforthe yevin him to pleie
That all that likid hym did her to eſe.
There n'as to her no manir lettir ſent,
That touchid love, from any manir wight,
That ſhe ne ſhewid hym or it was brent,
So plain ſhe was, and dyd her fullè might
That ſhe n'ill hidin nothyng from her knight,
Leſt he of any untrouthe her upbreide;
Withoutin bode his hertè ſhe obeide.
And eke he made hym jelous ovir her,
That what that any man had to her ſaied
Anon he would yprayin her to ſwere
What was that worde, or make him ill apaied;
Then wenid ſhe out of her witte have braied;
But all was nought but ſleight and flattirie;
Withoutin love he fainid jelouſie.
And all this toke ſhe ſo debonairly
That al his wil her thought it ſkilful thyng,
And er the lengir loved hym tendirly,
And did hym honour as he were a kyng;
Her herte was to hym weddid with a ryng,
For ſo ſerforthe on trouthe is her entent
That where he goith her hert with him went.
Whan ſhe ſhal ete on him is ſo her thought
That wel unnethis of mete toke ſhe kope,
And whan that ſhe was to her reſt ybrought
On him ſhe thought alway tyl that ſhe ſlepe,
Whan he was abſent prively dothe ſhe wepe:
Thus liveth faire Annelida the Quene
For falſe Arcyte, that dyd her al this tene.
This falſe Arcyte, of his newſangleneſſe,
For ſhe to him ſo lowly was and trewe,
Ytoke leſſe deintè for her ſtedfaſteneſſe,
And ſawe another lady proude and newe,
And right anon he clad him in her hewe,
Wote I not whethir in white, red, or grene,
And falſid faire Annelida the Quene.
But nerthèleſſe, grete wondir was it none
Though he were falſe, for it' is the kinde of man
Sithe Lamech was, that is ſo longe agone,
To be in love as falſe as er he can;
He was the firſtè fathir that began
To lovin two, and was in bigamie,
And he founde tentis firſt but yf men lye.
This falſe Arcite ſomwhat muſt he nede faine
Whan he was falſe to coveren his traitourie,
Right as an horſe that can both bite and plaine,
For he bare her in honde of trechirie,
And ſwore he coude her doubleneſſe eſpye,
And al was falſeneſſe that ſhe to him ment;
Thus ſwore this theſe, and forth his way he went.
Alas! what hertè might endurin it
For routhe or wo her ſorowe for to tel,
Or what man hath the conning or the wit,
Or what man might within the chambre dwel,
If I to him reherſin ſhall the hel
That ſuffrith faire Annelida the Quene,
For falſe Arcite, that did her al this tene?
She wepith, wailith, ſwounith, pitouſly;
To grounde as ded ſhe fallith as a ſtone;
She crampiſhith her limmis crokidly;
She ſpekith as her witte were al agone;
Othir colour than aſhin hath ſhe none,
Ne none othir worde ſpekith ſhe moch or lite,
But *Mercy, cruil hertè min, Arcite!*
And thus endurcth til that ſhe was ſo mate
That ſhe ne' hath fote on which ſhe may ſuſtene,
But forth languiſhing er in this eſtate,
Of whiche Arcite hath neithir rothe ne tene;
His herte was elliſwhere ſette new and grene,
That on her wo ne deineth him not to think;
Him reckith ner whethir ſhe ſlete or ſinke.
This newè lady holdith him ſo narowe
Up by the bridil at the ſtav'is ende,
That every worde he dred it is as an arowe;
Her daungir made him bothè bowe and bende,

And as her luſte madin him turne or wende,
For ſhe ne grauntid him in her living
No grace why that he hath thereof to ſinge,
But drove him forth; unneth liſt her to knowe
That he was ſervaunt to her ladyſhip.
But leſte that he were proude ſhe held him lowe;
Thus ſervith he withoutin mete or ſlp;
She ſente him nowe to lande and nowe to ſhip,
And for ſhe yave him daungir al his fil
Therfore ſhe had him at her ownè wil.
Enſample' of this, ye thriftie women al,
Take hede of Annelida' and falſe Arcite,
That for her liſt him her dere hertè call,
And was ſo meke, therefore he loved her lite;
The kinde of mann'is herte is to delite
On thing that ſtraunge is, al ſo God me ſave,
For what they may not get that wold they have.
Now turne we to Annelida ayen,
That pinith day by day in languiſhing;
But whan ſhe ſawe that her ne gate no geyn,
Upon a day ful ſoro'wfully weping.
She caſt her for to make a complaining,
And with her ownè hande ſhe gan it write,
And ſente it to her Theban knight Arcyte.

The Complaint of Annelida to falſe Arcite.

So thirlid with the point of remembraunce
The ſwerde of ſorowe, whette with falſe pleſaunce,
Myne hertè bare of bliſſe and black of hewe,
That turnid is to quaking all my daunce,
My ſewertye in wapid countinaunce,
Sens it availith nothing to ben trewe,
For who ſo trewe is certes it ſhall her rewe
That ſervith Love, and dothe her obſervaunce
Alway to one, and chaungith for no newe.
I wote my ſelfe as well as any wight,
For I loved one with al min hert and might,
More than my ſelf an hundred thouſande ſith,
And callid him my hert'is lyfe, my knight,
And was al his as ferre as it was right,
And whan that he was glad than was I blythe,
And his diſeſe ywas my dethe as ſwithe,
And he ayen his trouthe hath to me plight
For evirmore his lady me to kithe.
Now is he falſe, alas! and cauſèles,
And of my wo he is ſo routhèles
That with a worde him liſt not onis daine
To bring ayen my ſorowful herte in pees,
For he is caught up in an othir lees;
Right as hym lyſt he laughith at my paine,
And I ne can min hertè not reſtraine
For to love him yet alway nertheles,
And of all this I n'ot to whom to plaine.
And ſhulde I plain, alas the hardè ſtounde!
Unto my foe that yave myn herte a wounde,
And yet deſirith that myne harme be more?
Now certis ferthir woll I nevir founde
None othir helpe my ſoris for to ſounde,
My Deſtiny hath ſhapid ſo ful yore,
I woll none othir medècyne ne lore,
I woll ben aye there I was onis bounde,
That I have ſaid be ſaid for evirmore,

Alas! where is become your gentilneſſe,
Your wordes full of pleſaunce and humbleneſſe,
Your obſervaunce in ſo lowe a manere,
Your awaitinge, and eke your beſineſſe,
On me, that ye the callid your maiſtreſſe,
Your ſovèraine lady in this worlde here?
Alas! is there now neithir worde ne chere
Ye vouchſafin upon myn hevineſſe?
Alas! your love I bye it al to dere!
Now certis, ſwete Arcitè! though that ye
Thus cauſèleſſe the rufull cauſe ybe
Of all my pyne and dedly' adverſite,
Your manly treaſoun ought it to reſpite
To ſle your ſothefaſt frende, and namely me,
Whiche that have nevir yet in no degre
Offendid you in ought, as wiſly he
That all thinges wote of wo my ſoulè quite.
But for I was ſo plain to the Arcite
In all my wordes and workis moche and lite,
And was ſo befy aye you to delite,
Myne honour only ſave, meke, kinde, and ſre,
Therefore, Arcite, ye put in me this wite:
Alas! alas! ye rechin not a mite
Though that the percing ſwerde of ſorow byte
My woful hert thorough your cruilte.
My ſwetè foe! why do ye ſo for ſhame?
And thinkin ye that furthered be your name
To lovin a newe and ben untrewe aye,
And putin you in ſlaundir nowe and blame,
And do to me adverſyte and grame
That love you moſt, God thou wotiſt alwaye?
Yet turne ayen, and yet be plaine ſome daye,
And then ſhall this that now is mis ben game,
And al forgevin whilis I lyve maye.
Lo, hertè myne! al this is for to ſaine,
As whethir ſhal I praye or ellis plaine?
Which is the way to done you to be trewe?
For eithir mote I have you in my chaine
Or with the deth ye mote depart us twayne,
There beth none othir mene ne wayis newe,
For God ſo wyſely on my ſoulè rewe
As verily ye ſlaine me with the paine,
That mowe ye ſe unfainid on mine hewe.
For thus ferforth have I my deth yſought,
My ſelfe I murdir with my privie thought;
For ſorowe' and routhe of your unkindèneſſe
I wepe, I waile, I faſt; al helpith naught;
I voide alle joy that is to ſpeak of aught,
I voide alle company, I flye gladneſſe;
Who may avaunt her bet of hevineſſe
Than I? and to this plite have me ye brought
Withoutin gilte; me nedith no witneſſe.
And ſhoulde I pray and weivin womanhede?
Nay, rathir deth than do ſo foule a dede;
And aſke mercy and giltèleſſe? what nede?
And if that I complaine what life I lede
You reckith not, that know I out of drede;
And if I unto you mine othis bede
For mine excuſe, a ſcorne ſhal be my mede;
Your chere yflourith but it woll not fede;
Ful longe agon I might have takin hede:
For though I had you to morowe againe
I might as well hold Aprilis from raine
As holdin you to makin you ſtedfaſt;

Almyghty God! of trouthe the ſoveraine,
Wher is the trouth of man? who hath it ſlaine?
She that 'hem lovith ſhall 'hem finde as faſt
As in a tempeſt is a rottin maſt.
Is that a tame beſt that is evir faine
To renne away when he is leſt agaſt?
Nowe mercy, ſwete Arcite! if I miſſay;
Whethir have I aught ſaid out of the way
I n'ot; my witte is waſtid al away:
I fare as doth the ſonge of chantepleure,
For nowe I plaine and nowe agen I pley;
I am ſo maſid that I dey, I dey;
Arcite, Arcite, hath born away the key
Of al my wele and my gode avinture:
For in this world there ne is no creture
Walking, alas! in more diſcomfiture
Than I, ne that more ſorowe doth endure,
For yf I ſlepe a furlonge way or twey
Than thinkith me anon that your figure
Suppliant before me ſtante clad in aſure,
Redy efte to profre a newe aſſure
For to ben trewe, and mercy me to prey.
The longè night this wondir ſyght I drie,
That on the day for ſoche affray I dye;
And of al this right naught iwys ye retche;
Ne nevirmore myne eyin two ben drye;
And to your routhe and to your trouthe I crye,
But wel away! to ferre ben they to fetche:
Thus holdith me my Deſtiny a wretche;
But me to rede out of this drede or gye
Ne may my wit (ſo weke is it) not ſtretche.
Than ende I thus, ſithe I may do no more,
I yeve it up for nowe and evirmore,
For I ſhall nevir efte putten in balance
My ſikirneſs, ne lerne of love the lore,
But as the ſwan, I have herde ſay ful yore,
Ayenſt his deth wol ſing in his penance,
So ſinge I here the deſtinie and chaunce
Howe that Arcite Annelida ſo ſore
Hath thrillid with the poynt of remembraunce.
Whan that Annelida, this woful Quene,
Hath of her hande ywrittin in this wiſe,
With face all dede, betwixin pale and grene,
She fel a ſwoune, and ſithe ſhe gan to riſe,
And unto Mars avowith ſacrifiſe
Within the temple, with a ſorowfull chere,
That ſhapin was as ye may plainly here.

THE COMPLAINT

OF THE BLACKE KNIGHT.

The heavy Complaint of a knight for that he can not win his lady's grace.

N Maie, when Flora the freſhe luſtie quene
The ſoile hath cladde in grene, and red, and whight,
And Phœbus gan to ſhede his ſtremis ſhene
Amidde the Bulle with al the bemis bright,
And Lucifer to chace awaie the night,
Ayen the morowe our orizont hath take
To bid all lovirs out of ſlepe awake,

And hertis hevie for to recomforte
From drerihed of hevie night'is ſorowe,
Nature bad 'hem riſe, and 'hem diſporte
Ayen' the godelie and the glad greie morowe,
And hope alſo, with Saincte Ihon to borowe,
Bad in deſpite of daungir and diſpaire
For to takin the wholſome luſtie aire;

And with a ſigh I gan for to abreide
Out of my ſlombre', and ſodainly up ſterte,
As he (alas) that nigh for ſorowe deide,
My ſikeneſſe ſate aye ſo nie my herte,
But for to findin ſoccour of my ſmerte,
Or at the leſt ſome releſe of my paine,
That me ſo ſore yhalte in every veine.

I roſe anone, and thought I wouldè gone
Into the wodde to here the birdis ſyng
When that the miſtie vapour was agone,
And cleare and faire ywas the morownyng,
The dewe alſo like ſilvir in ſhinyng
Upon the levis, as any baume ſwete,
Till firie Titan with hiſperſaunt hete

Had dryid up the luſtie licour newe
Upon the herbis in the grenè mede,
And that the floures of many divers hewe
Upon ther ſtalkis gonin for to ſprede,
And for to ſplaie out ther levis in brede
Againe the ſonne, golde burnid in his ſpere,
That doun to 'hem ycaſt his bemis clere.

And by a rivir forthe I gan coſtie
Of watir clere as birell or criſtall,
Till at the laſt I founde a little weie
Toward a parke, encloſid with a wall,
In compace rounde, and by a gatè ſmall:
Who ſo that would he freſhe mightin gone'!
Into this parke, ywallid with grene ſtone:

And in I went to here the birdis ſong,
Which on the braunchis both in plain and vale
So loude yſang that all the wode yrong
Like as it ſhould ſhivir in pecis ſmale,
And as methoughtin that the nightingale
With ſo great might her voice began out wreſt
Right as her harte for love would all to breſt.

The ſoile was plain and ſmoth, and wondir ſoft,
All overſprad with tapettes that Nature
Had made her ſelf, covirid eke aloft
With bowis grene, the flouris for to cure,
That in their beautie thei maie long endure
From all aſſaulte of Phœbus fervent fere,
Whiche in his ſphere ſo hotte yſhone and clere.

The aire attempre, and the ſmothè winde
Of Zephyrus emong the bloſomes white
So wholſome was and nouriſhing by kinde,
That ſmale buddis and round bloſomis lite
In maner gan of her brethe to delite,
To yeve us hope that there fruict ſhall ytake
Ayeniſt autumpne redy for to ſhake.

I ſawe the Daphne cloſid undir rinde,
With the grene laurir and the wholſome pine,
The Mirre alſo, that wepith ever' of kinde,
The cedris hie, as upright as a line,
The filbert eke, that lowe doith encline
Her bowis grene unto the yerth adoun
Unto her knight callid Demophoon.

There ſawe I growing eke the freſhe hauthorne
In white motley, that ſo ſote doeth yſmell,
Aſhe, firre, and oke, with many a yong acorn,
And many a tre mo then I can tell,
And me beforne I ſaw a little well,
That had his courſe, as I could wele beholde,
Undir an hill, with quicke ſtremis and colde,
The gravill gold, the watir pure as glaſſe,
The bankis rounde the well invironing,
And ſoft as velvet was the yongè graſſe
That thereupon luſtilie came ſpringyng,
The ſute of trees aboutin compaſſyng
Ther ſhadowe caſt, cloſyng the wel arounde,
And all the herbis growyng on the grounde.
The water was ſo wholſome and ſo vertuous
Through might of herbis growyng it beſide,
Not like to the welle where as Narciſſus
Iſlain was through the vengeaunce of Cupide,
Where ſo wondir covertly he did hide
The grain of deth upon eche fatal brinke
That deth mote folowe who that ever drinke;
Ne like unto the pitte of the Pegace
Undir Parnaſſus, where poëtis ſlept,
Nor like to the welle of pure chaſtitè
Which that Diana with her nymphis kept,
When ſhe nakid into the watir lepte,
That ſlowe Actæon with her handis fell,
Onily for he came ſo nigh the well:
But this welle which that I now here reherſe
So wholſome was that it wouldin aſwage
Wightes bollin hertis, and the venim perce
Of Penſifehed, withall the cruill rage,
And ovir more refreſhin the viſage
Of them that were in any werineſſe
Of grete labour, or fallin in diſtreſſe.
And I that had through daungir and diſdain
So drie a thurſt, thought that I would aſſaie
To taſtin a draught of this welle or twain,
My bittir langour if it might alaie,
And on the banke anone me doune I laie,
And with mine hed unto the welle I raught,
And of the watir dranke I a gode draught,
Whereof me thought I was refreſhid wele
Of the brennyng that ſate ſo nigh my herte,
That verily anone I gan to fele
An hugè parte releſid of my ſmerte,
And therewithall anone up I aſterte,
And thought that I would walkin and ſe more
Forthe in the parke and in the holtis hore.
And thorough a launde as I yede apace,
And gan aboutin faſt for to beholde,
I founde anone a delectable place
That was beſet with treis young and olde,
Whoſe namis here for me ſhal not be tolde,
Amidde of whiche there ſtode an herbir grene
That benchid was with coloures new and clene.
This herbir was all full of flouris gende,
Into the whiche as I beholde began,
Betwixt an hulſere and a wodè bende,
As I was ware, I ſawe where laie a man
In blacke, and of white colour pale and wan,
And wondir dedly alſo of his hewe,
Of hurtis grene and freſhè woundis newe,
And ovirmore diſtrainid with ſickneſſe
Beſide all this he was full grevouſlie,
For upon hym he had an hote acceſſe
That daie by daie hym ſhoke ful pitouſlie,
So that for conſtraint of his maladie
And hertely wo, thus lying all alone,
It was a deth for one to here hym grone.
Whereof aſtoined, my fote I gan withdrawe,
Full gretly wondiring what it might be
That he ſo laye and haddin no ſelawe,
Ne that I coude no wight with him yſe,
Wherof I had grete routhe and eke pite,
And gan anone, ſo ſoftely as I coude,
Amonge the buſhis prively me to ſhroude,
If that I myght in any wiſe eſpie
What was the cauſe of this his dedly wo,
Or why that he ſo petouſly gan crie
On his fortune, and on his ure alſo;
With all my myght I layid an ere to
Everȳ worde, to marke wel what he ſaide
Out of his ſwough anon as he abraide.
But firſt, if I ſhulde makin mencion
Of his perſone, and plainly him diſcrive,
He was in ſothe, without excepcion,
To ſpeke of manhode one of the beſt on live,
There may no man ayen the trouth yſtrive,
For of his time and of his age alſo
He provid was there men ſhuld have ado.
One of the beſt therto of brede and length,
So wel ymade by gode proporcion,
If he had be in his delivir ſtrength,
But thought and ſickneſſe were occaſyon
That he thus lay in lamentacyon
Grouffe on the grounde, in place ſo deſolate,
Sole by him ſelf, awhapid and amate.
And for me ſemith that it is fitting
His wordis al to put in remembraunce,
To me that herdin all his complaining,
And al the grounde of this his woful chaunce,
If there withall I maye you do pleſaunce,
I wol to you ſo as I can anone,
Lyke as he ſaide, reherce everichone.
But who ſhal helpin me nowe to complaine,
Or who ſhal nowe my ſtilè gie or lede?
O Niobe! let nowe thy teris rayne
Into my penne, and helpe me eke in nede
Thou woful Myre! that feliſt mine herte blede
Of pitous ſorowe, and myne hande eke quake,
What that I writin for this mann'is ſake;
For unto wo accordith complaining,
And doleful cherè unto hevineſſe,
To ſorowe alſo ſighing and weping,
And pitous mourning unto drerineſſe;
And whoſo that ſhall writin of diſtreſſe
In party nedith to knowe felingly
The cauſe and rote of al ſoche malady.
But I, alas! that am of witte but dul,
And that have no knowing of ſoche matere,
For to diſcrive and writin at the ful
The woful Complainte which that ye ſhal here,
But even like as doth a ſkrivinere,
That can no more tell what that he ſhal write
But as his maiſtir beſide dothe endite;

Ryght ſo fare I, that of no ſentement
Can ſayin right naught in concluſioun,
But as I herde whan that I was preſent
This man complinin with a pitous ſoun,
For even like without addicioun
Or diſencreſe eythir of more or leſſe
For to reherſe anone I wol me dreſſe.

And if that any nowe be in this place
That ſelith in love breninge or fervence,
Or hindirid were to his ladie's grace
With falſe tongis, that with peſtilence
Sle trewe men, that nevir did ofference
In worde nor dede, ne yet in ther entent,
If any ſoche there be here nowe preſent,

Let him of routhe lay him to audience
With doleful chere and ſobre countinaunce,
To herin this man by ful hye ſentence
Hys mortal wo and his dire perturbaunce
Complaining, and nowe lying in a traunce
With lokis upcaſt and with ruful chere,
Th' effecte of which was as ye now ſhal here.

The thought oppreſſed with inward ſighis ſore,
The painful lyfe, the body languiſhing,
The woful goſt, the hertè rent and tore,
The pitous chere, all pale in complaining
The dedly face, like aſhis in ſhining,
The ſalte teris that from min eyin fall,
Parcel declare grounde of my painis al.

Whoſe hertè is grounde to blede in hevineſſe
The thought receite of wo and of complainte,
The breſt is cheſt of dole and drerineſſe,
The body eke ſo feble and ſo fainte,
With hote and colde mine axis is ſo mainte,
That nowe I chivir for defaute of hete,
And hote as glede nowe ſodainly I ſwete;

Nowe hote as fire, nowe cold as aſhis ded,
Now hote for colde, now cold for hete again,
Now cold as yſe, and now as colis red
For hete I brenne; and thus betwixin twaine
I poſſid am and al forcaſte in paine,
So that my hete ful plainly as I fele
Of grevous colde is cauſe every dele.

This the colde of inward hie diſdaine,
Cold of diſpite, and colde of cruil hate,
This is the colde that doth his beſy payne
Ayeniſt trouthe to fight and to debate,
This is the colde that doth the fyre abate
Of trewe mening, alas the harde while!
This is the coldè that wol me begile:

For er the bettir that in trouth I mente
With al my myght her faithfully to ſerve,
With hert and al to be right diligent,
The leſſè thanke, alas! I can deſerve;
Thus for my trouthè Daungir doth me ſterve,
For one that ſhuld my deth of mercy let
Hath made Deſpite anew his ſwerde to whet

Againſt me, and his arowis to fyle,
To take vengeaunce of wilful cruilte,
And tongis falſe thorough ther ſlightly wyle
Han gone a werre, that wil not ſtintid be,
And falſe Envie, with Wrathe and Envyte,
Have conſpirid againſt al right and lawe
Of ther malyce that Trouth ſhal be yſlawe.

And Malèbouche gan firſt the talè tel,
To ſclaundir Trouth of indignacion,
And Falſe Reporte ſo laud yrange the bel
That Miſbyleſe and Falſe Suſpection
Have Trouthe ybrought to his dampnacion,
So that, alas! wrongfully he dyith,
And Falſeneſſe nowe his place occupyith,

And entiid is into Trouth's londe,
And hath thereof the ful poſſeſſion.
O rightful God! that firſt the trouthè fonde,
Howe maie thou ſuffre ſoche oppreſſyon,
That Falſhed ſhulde have juriſdiction
In Troth's right to ſle him giltiles!
In his fraunchiſe he may not live in pees.

Falſly accuſed, and of his fone forjuged,
Withoutin anſwere, while he was abſent,
He damnid was, and maie not be excuſed,
For Cruilte yſate in judgement
Of Haſtineſſe without adviſement,
And badde Diſdaine do execute anone
His judgèment in preſence of his fone.

Attorney there maye none admittid ben
To excuſe Trouthè, ne a worde to ſpeke;
To faith or othe the judge ne liſte not ſene;
There ne is no gaine but he will be wreke.
O Lorde of Trouthe! to the I cal and clepe,
Howe may thou ſein thus in thy preſence
Withoutin mercy murdrid Innocence!

Nowe God, that art of trouthè ſovèraine,
And ſeiſt how I lie for trouthè bounde,
So ſore yknitte in lov'is fyrie chaine, (wounde,
Even at the deth, through gyrte with many' a
That lykily are nevir for to ſounde,
And for my trouthe am dampnid to the deth,
And not abyde, but drawe along the breth,

Conſidre' and ſe in thine eternal right
Howe that min herte profeſſid whilom was
For to be trewè with al my ful myght
Onily to one, the whiche nowe, alas!
Of volunte without any treſpas
Myne accuſours hath takin unto grace,
And cheriſhith 'hem my deth to purchace.

What menith this? what is this wondir ure
Of purveiaunce, yf ſo I ſhal it cal,
Of god of Love, that falſe 'hem ſo aſſure,
And trewe, alas! downe of the whele ben fal!
And yet in ſothe this is the worſt of al,
That falſhed wrongfully' of troth hath name,
And trouth ayenward of falſhed the blame.

This blindè chaunce, this ſtormy avinture,
In love hath moſtely his experience,
For who that doth with trouthè moſt his cure
Shal for his medle yfindin moſte offence
That ſervith Love with al his diligence,
For who can fainin undir lowly hede
Ne failith not to findin grace and ſpede:

For I lovid one ful longe ſythe agone
With all mine herte, and body, and ful might,
And to be ded my herte can not gone
From his beheſte, but hold that he hath hyght;
Though I be baniſhid out of her ſyght,
And by her mouth dampnid that I ſhall dey,
To my beheſte yet I will er obey:

For evir ſithins that the worlde began,
Who ſo lyſte lokin and in ſtory rede,
He ſhal aye findin that the trewè man
Was put abacke there where as the falſhede
Yfurthered was; for Love takith none hede
To ſle the trew, and hath of 'hem no charge,
Where as the falſe gothe frely at ther large.
I take recorde of true Palamedes,
The giltleſs man, the noble worthy knight,
That evir lovid and had no reles,
Notwithſtanding his manhode and his might,
Yet Love unto him dyd ful gret unright,
For aye the bet he dyd in chivalrye
The more he ſtill was hindrid by envye;
And aye the bett he did in every place,
Thorough his knighthode and his buſy paine,
The ferdir was he from his ladye's grace,
For to her mercy might he ner attaine,
And to his deth he coude it not refraine
For no daungere, but aye obey and ſerve
As he beſte coude, plainly tyl that he ſterve.
What was the fyne alſo of Hercules
For al his conqueſt and his worthineſſe,
That was of manly ſtrength alone pereles?
For lyke as bokis of him liſte expreſſe
He ſet pillers thorough his hye proweſſe
Away at Gades, for to ſygnifie
That no man might him paſſe in chivalrye;
The whichè pilliris ferre beyonde Inde
Beſet of golde for a rememberaunce,
And for al that yet was he ſet behinde
With 'hem that love lyſte febly to avaunce;
For him, alas! ſet laſt upon a daunce
Againiſt whom there helpè may no ſtrife.
And ſo for al his trouth he loſte his life.
Phœbus alſo, for al his pleſaunt lyght,
Whan that he wonid here in yerthe belowe,
Unto the verry herte with Venus ſight
Ywoundid was thorough Cupidis bowe,
And yet his lady lyſt him not to knowe:
Though for the love of her his herte dy'd blede
She let him go, and toke of him no hede.
What ſhal I ſayin of yonge Pyramus,
Of trewe Triſtram, for al his lye renowne,
Of Achilles or of Antonius,
Of Arcytè, or of him Pelomowne?
What was the ende of ther paſſiowne
But aftir ſorowe deth and than ther grave?
Lo, here the guerdon that theſe lovirs have!
But falſè Jaſon with his doubleneſſe,
That was untrue at Colchos to Medee,
And Theſeus, rote of unkindèneſſe,
And with theſe two alſo the falſe Enee,
Lo! thus the falſe evir in one degre
Haddin in love ther luſt and al ther wil,
And ſave falſhode there was none othir ſkil.
Of Thebis city eke the falſe Arcite,
And falſir Demophon eke for his ſouthe,
They had ther luſt and al that myght delite
For al ther falſhode and ther gret untrouthe;
Thus evir Love, alas! and that is routhe,
His falſe liegis forthirith what he may,
And feeth the trewe ungedely day by day:
For trewe Adonis was ſlayne with the bore
Amidde the foreſt in the grenè ſhade,
For Venus love he ſeltin al the ſore,
But Vulcanus with her no mercy made,
The ſoulè chorle had many nightis glade,
Where Mars Armipotent, her knight and man,
To ſyndin mercy comforte none he can.
Alſo the yongè freſhe Hippomenes,
So luſtly fre he was of his corage
That for to ſerve with al his hert he ches
Atalanta, ſo faire of her viſage,
But Love, alas! quite him ſo ill his wage,
With cruil daungir plainly at the laſte.
That with the dethè guerdonleſſe he paſte.
Lo here, alas! the fine of Love's ſervice!
Lo howe that Love can his ſervauntis quite!
Low how he can his faithful men diſpiſe,
To ſle the trewe men and falſe to reſpite!
Lo howe he dothe the ſwerde of ſorowe byte
In hert'is ſoche as moſte his luſte obey,
To ſave the falſe and do the trewe to dey!
For faith, nor othe nor worde, ne aſſuraunce,
Trewè mening, nor awaite, nor buſyneſſe,
Neithir ſtil porte ne faithful attendance,
Manhode, ne might in armis, worthineſſe,
Nor purſute of worſhip nor hie proweſſe,
Nor in ſtraunge landis riding ne travaile,
Ful lytil or nought in love dothe availe.
Peril of dethe neithir in ſe ne lande,
Hungir ne thurſt, ſorowe ne ſykèneſſe,
Ne gret empriſis for to take on hande,
Sheding of blode, ne manful hardineſſe,
Ne ofte wounding at ſautis by diſtreſſe,
Nor in parting of life, nor deth alſo,
Al is for nought; Love taketh no hedè therto.
But leſingoures with ther baſe flattirie,
Through ther falſhede, and with ther doubleneſſe,
With talis newe, and many ſainid lie,
By falſe ſemblaunt and counterfeit humbleſſe,
Undir colour depainte with ſtedfaſtneſſe,
With fraude covered under a pitous face,
Acceptid be nowe rathiſt unto grace,
And can themſelvin nowe beſt magnifie
With ſainid porte and ther preſumpcion;
They hauncin ther cauſe with falſe ſurquidrie,
Undir menyng of double entencion,
To thinkin one in ther opinion,
And ſaye' anothir to ſet them ſelf aloſte,
And hindir trouthe, as it is ſene ful ofte.
The whichè thinge I bye nowe al to dere,
Thankid be Venus and the god Cupide,
As it is ſene by mine oppreſſid chere,
And by his arowes that ſtycken in my ſide,
That ſave my deth I nothinge elles abide
Fro day to day, alas the hardè while!
Whenevir his darte that hym lyſt to file,
My woful hertè for to rive atwo,
For faute of mercy and lack of pite
Of her that cauſith al my paine and wo,
And lyſte not onis of grace for to ſe
Unto my trothe thorough her cruelte;
And moſt of al for this I me complaine,
That ſhe hath joy to laughin at my paine.

And wilfully ſhe hath my deth yſworne
Al giltileſſe, and wote no cauſe why,
Save for the trouthè that I had aforne
To her alone to ſervin faithfully.
O god of Love! all unto the I crye,
And to thy blynde and double deite
Of this my gret wronge I complainè me,
And to thy ſtormy wilful variance,
Iment with chaunge and gret unſtableneſſe,
Now up now doune, ſo renning is thy chaunce,
That the to truſt may be no ſikirneſſe,
I wite it nothinge but thy doubleneſſe;
And who that is an archir and is blende
Markith nothinge, but ſhotith ay by wende;
And for that he hath no diſcrecion
Without adviſe he let his arowe go;
For lacke of ſight and alſo of reſon,
In his ſhoting it happith oftin ſo
To hurte his frendiſt rathir than his fo:
So doith this blind god with his ſharpe ſlone,
The trew he fleeth and lettith the falſe gone.
And of his wounding this is worſt of al,
Whan he hurt doith to ſo cruil wretche,
And makith the ſycke for to crie and cal
Unto his very foe to be his leche;
And harde it is, ſothe, for a man to ſeche,
Upon the point of deth in jeoperdye,
Unto his foe to findin remedie.
Right thus farith it nowe evin by me,
That to my foe that gave my herte a wounde
Mote aſkin grace, and mercy, and pite,
And namily there where none may be founde,
For nowe my ſore my lechè wil confounde,
And god of Kinde ſo ill hath ſet mine ure
My lyv'is foe to have my wounde in cure.
Alas the whilè nowe that I was borne,
Or that I evir ſawe the brightè ſonne!
For nowe I ſe plaine that ful longe aforne
Or I was borne my deſtiny was ſponne
By the Siſterne, to ſle me yf they conne,
For they my deth had ſhopin or my ſherte,
Onely for trouth I may it not aſterte.
The mighty goddeſſe alſo of Nature,
That undir God hath the whole govirnaunce
Of worldely thinges committid to her cure,
Diſpoſid have through her wiſe purveiaunce
To give my lady ſo moche ſuffiſaunce
Of al vertues, and therwithal purvyde
To murdre Trouth hath take Daungir to gide:
For bounte, beaute, ſhape, and femelihede,
For prudence, wit, and paſſingly faireneſſe,
For benigne porte, glad chere, with lowlyhede,
Of womanhede right plenteous largeneſſe,
Dame Nature dyd in her fully empreſſe
Whan ſhe her wrought, and althir laſt Diſdaine
To hindir Trouthe ſhe made her chambirlaine;
Whan Miſtruſt eke and Falſe Suſpeccion,
With Miſbeleve, ſhe madin ſor to be
Chefe of counſaile, to this concluſion,
For to exilin Trouthe and eke Pite,
Out of her courte to makin Mercy fle,
So that Diſpite now holdith forthe her reine
Through haily bileve of tales that men feine:

And thus I' am, only for my trouth, alas!
Murdrid and ſlayn with wordis ſharp and kene,
Although gyltleſſe God wote of al treſpas,
And lye and blede upon this coldè grene.
Nowe mercy, ſwete! mercy, my liv'is quene!
And to your grace of mercye yet I preye
In your ſervice that your true man may deye.
But if ſo be that I ſhal die algate,
And that I ſhal none other mercy have,
Yet of my deth let this yben the date,
That by your wil I was brought to my grave,
Or haſtily, if that you lyſte me ſave,
My ſharpe woundis, that akin ſo and blede,
Of mercy charme and alſo' of womanhede:
For othir charme plainly ne is there none
But onely mercy to helpe in this caſe,
For though my woundis blede evir in one
My lyfe, my deth, yſtandith in your grace;
And though my gilte ybe nothinge, alas!
I aſke mercy in all my beſt entente,
Redy to dyin if that ye aſſente:
For there againiſt ſhal I nevir ſtrive
In worde ne werkè, plainly I ne may,
For levir I have then to be alyve
To dye ſothly, and it be to her paye,
Ye, though it ſhuldè be this ſamè day,
Or whan that evir her lyſte to deviſe;
Suffiſith me to die in your ſerviſe. [wight
Thou, God! that knoweſt the thought of every
Right as it is, in every thing maiſt ſe,
Yet er I dyd with al my ful myght
Lowly I pray to grauntin unto me
That ye, lady godely, faire, freſhe, and fre!
Which onely ſle me for defaute of routhe,
Or that I dyin ye may knowe my trouthe:
For that in ſothe inow ſuffiſith me
And ſhe it knowe in every circumſtaunce,
And aftir I am wel apaide that ſhe,
If that her lyſt of deth to do vengeaunce,
Unto me that am undir her lygeaunce;
It fit me not her dome to diſobeye,
But at her luſte fulle wilfully to deye.
Withoutin grutchinge or rebellion
In wil or wordis wholy I aſſentè,
Or any manir contradiction,
Fully to be at her commaundèment;
And if I dyin, in my teſtament
My herte I ſende and my ſpirite alſo,
What ſo evir ſhe lyſte with 'hem to do.
And aldir laſt unto her womanhede
And to her mercy me I recommaunde,
That lye nowe here betwixin hope and drede,
Abidinge plainly what ſhe liſt commaunde,
For uttirly this ne is no demaunde;
Welcome to me whilis me laſtith breth,
Ryght at her choiſe, where it be lyfe or deth.
And in this matir more what might I faine,
Sithe in her hand and in her wil is al,
Bothe lyfe and deth, my joye and al my peine?
And, finally, my heſte holdin I ſhall
Tyl my ſpirite by deſtinye fatal,
Whan that her lyſtith fro my body wende,
Have here my trouth; and thus I make an ende.

And with that worde he gan to ſighe as ſore,
Like as his hert yrivin would atwaine,
And helde his pece, and ſpake no wordè more;
But for to ſe his wo and mortal paine
The teris gonin fro mine eyin raine
Ful piteouſly, for very inwarde rothe
That I him ſawè ſo long wiſhyng for troth.

And al this while my ſelfe I keptè cloſe
Amonge the bowis, and my ſelfe gonne hide,
Tyl at the laſt the woful man aroſe,
And to a lodge ywent there cloſe beſide,
Where al the May his cuſtome was t'abyde,
Sole to complainin of his painis kene
From yere to yere undir the bowis grene.

And for bycauſe that it drewe to the night,
And that the ſonnè his arke diurnal
Ypaſſid was, ſo that his perſaunt lyght,
His brightè bemis and his ſtremis al,
Were in the wavis of the watir ſal
Undir the bordure of our ocean,
His chare of golde his courſe ſo ſwiftly ran;

And while the twilight and the rowis rede
Of Phœbus light were deaurat alite
A penne I toke, and gan me faſt to ſpede
The woful plaintis of this man to write
All worde by worde right as he did endite;
Like as I herde and coude him tho reporte
I have here ſet, your hertis to diſporte.

If ought be miſſe laye all the wite on me,
For I am worthy for to bere the blame;
If any thinge amyſſe reportid be
To make this ditte for to ſemè lame,
Through myne unconning for to ſain the ſame
Like as this man his Complaint dyd expreſſe,
I aſke you mercy and forgivèneſſe.

And as I wrote me thought I ſawe aferre,
Aferre in the weſt, luſtily appere
Eſperus, the ſo bright and godely ſterre,
So glade, ſo faire, ſo perſaunte, eke of chere,
I menè Venus, with her bemis clere,
That hevy hertis only to releve
Is wonte of cuſtome for to ſhewe at eve;

And I as faſt ſel adowne on my kne,
And evin thus to her gan I to prey;
O lady Venus, ſo feire on to ſe!
Let not this ſothfaſt man for his trouthe deye,
For that joy which thou haddiſt whan thou leye
With Mars thy knight when Vulcanus yfonde,
And with a chaine unvifible you bonde

Togidir bothè tway, in the ſame whyle
That al the courte above celeſtial
At your ſhamè began to laughe and ſmyle:
Ah! fairiſt lady! willy ſonde at al,
Comforte to careful goddis immortal
Be helping nowe, and do thy diligence
To let the ſtremis of thine influence

Diſcendin downe in forthering of the trouth,
Namely of 'hem that lye in ſorowe bounde;
Shew now thy might, and on ther wo have routh
Er that falſe Daungir ſle 'hem and confounde;
And ſpecial let thy might in this be founde
For to help and ſocour what that thou may
The trewe man that in the herbir lay,

And al that trewe are forthir for his ſake,
O gladè ſterre! o lady Venus myne!
And cauſe his lady him to grace to take;
Her hert of ſtele to mercy ſo encline,
Er that thy bemis go up to declyne,
And er that thou nowe go fro us adowne,
For that love which thou haddiſt to Adowne.

And whan that ſhe wos gone unto her reſt
I roſe anone, and home to bed ywente,
For wery' I was, me thought it for the beſt,
Deſiring thus in al my beſt entente
That al trewe men that be with daungir ſhente
With mercy may, in releſe of ther paine,
Recurid be er Maye come efte againe.

And for that I ne may no lengir wake
Farewel, ye lovirs al that be trewe,
Praying to God, and thus my leve I take,
That er the ſonne to morowe be ryſen newe,
And er he have ayen his roſin hewe,
That eche of you may havin ſoche a grace
His owne lady in armis to embrace;

I mene thus only, in al honeſte,
Withoutin more, ye may togidir ſpeke
What ſo ye lyſtin at gode liberte,
That eche may to othir ther herte ybreke,
On Jelouſie only to be awreke,
That hath ſo long of malice and envy
Ywerrid Trouthè with his tiranny.

L'ENVOY.

Princeſſe! pleſith it your benignite
This lityl dyte for to have in minde
Of your womanhede, alſo for to ſe
That your trew man may of you mercy find
And pite eke, that longe hath be behinde;
Let him againe be provokid to grace,
For by my trouthe it is againſt alle kinde
That falſe Daungere ſhould occupye his place.

Go, lityl quaire, unto my liv'is quene,
And to my very hert'is ſovèraine,
And be right glad for that ſhe ſhal the ſene;
Soche is thy grace: but I, alas! in paine
And left behinde, and n'ot to whom to plaine,
For mercy, Ruthe, and Grace, and eke Pyte,
Exilid be, that I may not attaine
Recure to finde of mine adverſite.

THE

COMPLAINT OF MARS AND VENUS.

Gladith ye lovirs in the morowe graie;
Lo Venus riſſen emong yon rowis rede!
And flouris freſhè honour ye this daie,
For when the ſonne upriſt then would thei ſprede;
But ye lovirs that lie in any drede
Flyith, leſte wickid tonguis you aſpie:
Lo, yonde the ſonne, the candle' of Jelouſie!
With téris blewe and with a woundid hert
Taketh your leve, and with Sainct Ihon to borowe
Apeſith ſomwhat of your painis ſmert,
Time comith eft that ceſſin ſhall your ſorow;
The glad night is worthè an hevie morowe.
Sainct Valentine, a foule thus herde I ſing
Upon thy daie or ſonnè gan up ſpring:
Yet ſang this foule; I rede you all awake,
And ye that have not choſen in humble wiſe,
Without repentyng, chèſith now your make,
Yet at the leſt renoveleth your ſervice,
And ye that have full choſen, as I deviſe,
Confermith it perpetually to dure,
And pacientlie takith your avinture.
And for the worſhip of this highè feſte
Yet woll I in my bridd'is wiſe yſyng
The ſentence of the Complaint at the leſte
That wofull Mars made at the departyng
Fro freſhe Venus in a morownyng,
When Phœbus with his firie torchis rede
Ranſaked hath every lovir in his drede.
Whilome the thre hevenis lorde above,
As well by hevenliche revolucion
As by deſerte, hath wonne Venus his love,
And ſhe hath take him in ſubjeccion,
And as a maiſtreſſe taught him his leſſon,
Commaundyng hym nevir in her ſervice
He were ſo bolde no lovir to diſpiſe:
For ſhe forbade hym jelouſie at all,
And cruiltie, and boſte, and tirannie;
She made him at her luſte ſo humble' and thrall,
That when ſhe denied to caſt on him her eye
He toke in pacience to live or die;
And thus ſhe bridlith him in her manere
With nothing but with ſcorning of her chere.
Who reignith nowe in bliſſe but faire Venus,
That hath this worthi knight in govirnaunce?
Who ſingith nowe but Mars, that ſervith thus
The fayre Venus, the cauſir of pleſaunce?
He bint him to perpetuel obeiſſaunce,
And ſhe binte her to lovin him for ever,
But ſo he that his treſpace it diſcever.
Thus be they knitte, and reignin as in heven,
By loking moſt, as it fel on a tide,
That by ther bothe aſſent was ſet a ſteven
That Mars ſhall entre' as faſt as he may glyde
Into her neatè palays to abyde,
Walking his courſe til ſhe had hym ytake,
And he prayed her to haſte her for his ſake.
Than ſaide he thus; Myne hert'is lady ſwete!
Ye knowin wel my myſcheſe in that place,
For ſikirly tyl that I with you mete
My lyfe ſtante there in avinture and grace,
But whan I ſe the beaute of your face
There is no drede of deth may do me smerte,
For al your luſte is eſe unto mine herte.
She hath ſo grete compaſſion of her knight,
That dwellith in ſolitude til ſhe come,
For it ſtode ſo that ylkè time no wight
Counſailid him, ne ſaid to him welcome,
That nigh her wit for ſorowe was overcome,
Wherfore ſhe ſpedd her as faſt in her way
Almoſte in one daye as he did in tway.
The gret joye that ywas betwixe 'hem two
Whan they be mette there may no tongè tel,
There is no more but unto bedde they go,
And thus in joye and bliſſe I lette 'hem dwel;
This worthy Mars, that is of knighthode wel,
The floure of fairneſſe happith in his armes,
And Venus kyſſith Mars the god of Armes.
Sojournid hath this Mars, of which I rede,
In chambre' amydde the palais privily
A certaine time, til that him fel a drede
Through Phœbus, that was comin haſtily
Within the palais yatis ſturdily
With torch in honde, of which the ſtremis bright
On Venus chambre knockidin ful light.

The chambre there as laye this freshè quene
Depaintid was with white bolis grete,
And by the light she knew that shon so shene
That Phœbus came to bren 'hem with his hete;
This silly Venus, ny dreint in teres wete,
Enbrasith Mars, and said, Alas I die!
The torch is come that all this worlde wol wrie.

Up sterte tho Mars, him listid not to slepe
Whan he his lady herdin so complaine,
But for his nature was not for to wepe,
In stede of teris from his eyin twaine
The firie sparclis sprongin out for paine,
And hente his hauberke that lay him beside;
Fly wold he nought, ne might him selfin hide.

He throwith on his helme of hugè weight,
And girt him with his swerde, and in his honde
His mighty spere, as he was wont to feight,
He shakith so that it almost to wonde;
Ful hevy was he to walken ovir londe;
He may not holde with Venus company,
But badde her flye, leste Phœbus her espy.

O woful Mars, alas! what maist thou sain?
That in the palace of thy disturbaunce
Arte lefte behind in paril to be slaine,
And yet thereto is double thy penaunce,
For she that hath thine hert in govirnaunce
Is passid halfe the stremis of thine eyen;
That you n'ere swift wel maist thou wepe and crien.

Nowe flyeth Venus into Ciclinius tour
With voide corse, for fere of Phœbus light;
Alas! and there ne hath she no socour,
For she ne sonde ne sey no manir wight,
And eke as there she had but litil might,
Wherfore her selvin for to hide and save
Within the gate she stedde into a cave.

Darke was this cave, and smoking as the hel,
Nat but two paas within the yate it stode;
A naturel day in darke I let her dwel.
Now wol I speke of Mars, furious and wode,
For sorowe he wolde have seen his hert blode;
Sith that he might done her no companie
He ne rought not a mitè for to die.

So seble he wext for hete and for his wo
That nigh he swelt; he might unneth endure;
He passith but a sterre in dayis two;
But nertheles for al his hevy armure
He foloweth her that is his liv'is cure,
For whose departing he toke gretir yre
Than he did for his brenning in the fire.

Aftir he walkith softily a paas,
Complaining that it pite was to here;
He saide, O lady bright, Venus! alas
That er so wide a compas is my sphere!
Alas, whan shal I mete you, herte dere!
This twelve dayis of April I endure
Through jelous Phœbus this misavinture.

Now God helpe sely Venus all alone!
But as God wolde it happid for to be
That while that weping Venus made her mone
Ciclinius riding in his chyvaunche
Fro Venus, Valanus might this palais se,
And Venus he salvith and makith chere,
And her receivith as his frende ful dere.

Mars dwellith forth in his adversitie,
Complaining evir in her departing,
And what his complaint was remembrith me,
And therefore in this lustie morowning,
As I best can, I wol it saine and sing,
And aftir that I wol my leve ytake,
And God yeve every wight joy of his make!

THE COMPLAINT OF MARS.

Thir' ordir of Complaynt requireth ſkilfully
That if a wight ſhall plainin pitouſly
Ther mote be cauſe wherfore that men yplaine,
Or men may deme he playnith folily
And cauſèles: alas! that am not I,
Wherfore the grounde and cauſe of all my paine,
So as my troublid witte may it attaine,
I wol reherſe, not for to have redreſſe,
But to declare my grounde of hevineſſe.

The firſt time, alas! that I was ywrought,
And for certain effectis hidir brought
By him that lordith eche intelligence,
I yave my trewè ſervice and my thought
For evirmo, how dere I have it bought!
To her that is of ſo gret excellence
That what wight that ſhewith firſt her offence,
Whan ſhe is wrothe and taketh of him no cure,
He may not longe in joye of love endure.

This is no fainid matir that I tel;
My lady is the very ſours and wel
Of beaute, luſte, fredome, and gentilneſſe,
Of riche array howe dere ſo men it ſel,
Of al diſporte in whiche men frendly dwel,
Of love and play, and of benigne humbleſſe,
Of ſowne of inſtrumentes of al ſwetneſſe,
And thereto ſo wel fortuned and thewid
That through the world her godenes is ſhewid:

What wondir is than though that I beſette
My ſervice on ſoche one that may me knette
To wele or wo, ſithe it lithe in her might?
Therfore myne herte for er I to her hette,
Ne trewly for my deth ſhall I not lette,
To ben her trewiſt ſervant and her knight;
I flattir nat, that may wete every wight,
For this day in her ſervice ſhall I dye;
But grace be I ſe her nevir with eye.

To whom ſhal I plainin of my diſtreſſe?
Who may me help, who may my hert redreſſe?
Shal I complaine unto my lady fre?
Nay, certis, for ſhe hath ſoche hevyneſſe
For ſere and eke for wo, that as I geſſe
In litil time it would her bane ybe,
But were ſhe ſafe it were no force of me:
Alas that evir lovirs mote endure
For love ſo many per'ilous avinture!

For though ſo be that lovirs be as trewe
As any metal that is forgid newe,
In many' a caſe 'hem tidith oft ſorowe;
Somtime ther ladies wol nat on 'hem rewe,
Somtimis if that Jelouſy it knewe
They mightin lightly lay ther hed to borowe;
Somtimè envious folke with tongis horowe
Depravin 'hem: alas! whom may they pleſe?
But he be falſe no lovir hath his eſe.

But what availith ſoch a long ſermoun
Of avinturis of love up and doun?
I wol retourne and ſpekin of my paine:
The point is this, of my diſtruction
My right lady and my ſalvacioun
Is in affray, and n'ot to whom to plaine:
O hertè ſwete! o lady ſovèrayne!
For your diſeſe I ought wel ſwoun and ſwelt,
Though I none othir harme ne drede yfelt.

To what fine made the god that ſytte ſo hie
Beneth him othir love or companye,
And ſtrainith folke to love maugre ther hed?
And then ther joye for aught I can eſpie
Ne laſtith not the twinkeling of an eye,
And ſome have nevir joye til they be ded;
What menith this, what is this miſtihed?
Wherto conſtrainith he his folke ſo faſt
Thing to deſirin but it ſhould ylaſt?

And though he made a lovir love a thing,
And makith it ſeme ſtedfaſt and during,
Yet putteth he in it ſoche miſavinture
That reſt ne is ther none in his yeving;
And that is wondir that ſo juſte a king
Ydothe ſoche hardneſſe unto his creture;
Thus whethir lovè breke or ellis dure
Algatis he that hath with love to done
Hath oftir wo than chaungid is the mone.

It ſemeth he hath to lovirs enmyte,
And lyke a fiſher, as men may al day ſe,
Baitith his anglehoke with ſome pleſaunce,
Till many' a fiſhe is wode to that he be
Ceſid therwith, and then at erſt hath he
Al his deſire, and therwithal miſchaunce,
And though the line ybreke he hath penaunce,
For with that hoke he woundid is ſo ſore
That he his wagis hath for evirmore.

The broche of Thebis was of ſoche a kinde,
So ful of rubyes and of ſtones of Inde
That every wight that ſette on it an eye
He wende anone to worthy out of his mynde;
So ſore the beaute would his hert ybynde
Til it he had him thought he muſt ydie;
And when that it was his than ſhould he drie
Soche wo for drede aye while that he it had
That welnigh for the fere he ſhould be mad;

And whan it was fro his poſſeſſion
Than had he dóuble wo and paſſion
That he ſo faire a jewil hath forgo;
But yet this broche, as in concluſion,
Was not the cauſe of his confuſion,
But he that wrought it enfortuned it ſo
That every wight that had it ſhould have wo,
And therfore in the worchir was the vice,
And in the coveitour, that was ſo nice.

So farith it by lovirs and by me,
For though my lady have ſo grete beaute
That I was mad to I had gette her grace
She was not cauſe of mine adverſite,
But he that wroughtin her, as mote I the,
That put ſo gret a beaute in her face
That made me coveitin and ſo purchace
Myne ownè deth; him wite I that I die,
And mine unwit that er I clambe ſo hie.

But to you hardy knightis of renowne,
Sithe that ye be of my deviſyowne,
Al be' I not worthy to ſo gret a name,
Yet ſaine theſe clerkis I am your patrone,
Therfore ye ought have ſome compaſſione
Of my diſeſe, and take it nat agame,
The proudiſt of you may be made ful tame,
Wherfore I pray you of your gentilleſſe
That ye complainin for mine hevineſſe.

And ye, my ladyes, that ben trew and ſtable,
By way of kinde ye oughtin to ben able
To have pitie of folke that ben in paine;
Nowe have ye cauſe to clothin you in ſable;
Sith that your empères the honorable
Is deſolate wel oughtin ye to plaine;
Nowe ſhoude your holy teris ſal and raine:
Alas! your honour and your emperice
Nigh ded for drede ne can her not chevice.

Complainith eke ye lovirs al in fere
For her that with unfainid humble chere
Was evir redy to do you ſocour,
Complainith her that er hath be you dere,
Complainith beaute, fredome, and manere,
Complainith her that endith your labour,
Complainith thilke enſample' of al honour,
That nevir yet dyd ought but gentilneſſe;
Kythith therfore in her ſome kindèneſſe.

THE COMPLAINT OF VENUS.

THERE n'ys so high comfort to my plesaunce,
Whan that I am in my hèvinesse,
As for to have leysir of remembraunce
Upon the manhode and the worthynesse,
Upon the trouthe and on the stedfastnes,
Of him whose I am al while I maye dure;
There ought to blamin me nò creature,
For every wight praisith his gentillesse.
In him is bounte, wisedome, govirnaunce,
Well more than any mann'is witte can gesse,
For Grace hath wolde so ferforth him avaunce
That of knighthod he is parfite richesse,
Honour honourith him for his nobilesse,
Therto so wel hath fourmid him Nature
That I am his for er I him ensure,
For every wight praisith his gentillesse.
And natwithstanding all his suffisaunce
His gentil herte is of so gret humblesse
To me in worde, in werke, and in countenaunce,
And me to serve is al his besineſſe,
That I am sette in very sykirnesse;
Thus ought I to blisse wel mine ayintour,
Sith that him liste me servin and honour,
For every wight praisith his gentillesse.
Nowe certis, Love, it is right covenable
That men sul dere abye thy noble thinges,
As wake abedde and fastin at the table,
Weping to laugh, and singe in complainynges,
And downe to castin visage and lokinges,
Oftin to chaunge visage and countinaunce
Playe in slepinge, and dremin at the daunce,
Al the revers of any gladde seling.
Jelousy he hangid by a cable,
She wolde al knowin through her espiyng,
There dothe no wight nothing so resonable
That al n'is harme in her ymagining;
Thus dere abought is Love in his yeving,
Whiche ofte he yevith without ordinaunce,
As sorowe' ynough and litil of plesaunce,
Al the revers of any glade seling.
A litil tyme his yest is agreable,
But ful accombèrous is the usinge,
For subtil Jelousy the discevable
Ful oftin tyme ycausith distourbinge;
Thus ben we evir in drede and suffring:
In no certaine we languishen in penaunce,
And have wel ofte many an harde mischaunce,
Al thè revers of any gladde seling.
But certis, Love, I saye not in soche wise
That for to scape out of your lace I ment,
For I so longe have ben in your service
That for to letè of wil I ner assent,
No force though jelousye me doe tourment;
Suffisith me to se him whan I may,
And therfore certis to mine ending day
To love him best shal me nevir repent.
And certis, Love, whan I me wel advise
Of any' estate that man may represent
Than have ye made me thorough your franchise
Chesin the best that evir in erthe went;
Nowe love well, hert, and loke thou nevir stent,
And lette the jelous putte it in assaye
That for no paine ne wol I not say naye;
To love him best shall I nevir repent.
O herte! to the it ought ynoughe suffice
That Love so highe a grace hath to you sent
To chose the worthyist in allè wise,
And most agreable to mine entent;
Sekith no serthir neithir way ne went,
Sith ye have suffisaunce unto my paye:
Thus wol I ende this Complaint or this lay;
To love him best shal I nevir repent.

L'ENVOYE.

Princes, receveth this complaininge in gre,
Unto your excellent benignite
Directe aftir my litil suffisaunce,
For elde, that in my spirite dullith me,
Hath of enditing al the subtilte
Welnigh berafte out of my remembraunce;
And eke to me it is a grete penaunce,
Sith rime in Englishe hath soche scarcite,
To' folowe worde by worde the curiosite
Of Granson, flour of 'hem that make in Fraunce.

THE LAMENTACION

OF MARIE MAGDALEINE.

This treatise is taken out of St. Origen, wherein Mary Magdalen lamenteth the cruell death of her Saviour Christ.

Plongid in the wawe of mortall distresse,
Alas for wo! to whom shal I complein?
Or who shall devoide this grete bevinesse
Fro me', woful Marie, wofull Magalein!
My Lord is gon; alas! who wrought this tein?
This sodain chaunce persith my herte so depe
That nothing can I do but waile and wepe.

My Lorde is gone that here in grave was laied
Aftir his grete passion and deth cruell;
Alas! who hath hym thus again betraied?
Or what man here aboutin can me tell
Where he is become the Prince of Israell,
Jesus of Naz'areth, my ghostly succour,
My parfite love, and hope of all honour!

What creture hath hym hennis caryid,
Or how might this so sodainly befall?
I would I had here with him taryid,
And so should I have had my purpose all:
I bought ointmentes ful precious and roial,
Where with I hoped his corps to have anointed,
But he thus gone my minde is disapointed.

While I therefore advertise and beholde
This pitous chaunce here in my presence
Full litle marvaile though my hert be colde,
Confidiryng, lo! my Lord'is absence:
Alas that I so full of negligence
Should be foundin! because I come so late
All men maie saie I am infortunate.

Cause of my sorowe you maie undirstonde,
Quia tulerunt Dominum meum,
An othir is that I ne maie him fonde,
I wote nere *ubi posuerunt eum;*
Thus I moste bewaile *dolorem meum*
With hertie wepying I can no bet deserue
Till Deth approche my herte for to kerve.

My herte oppress with sodain aventure
By fervent anguisshe is bewrappid so
That long this life I ne maie not endure,
Soche is my pain, soch is my mortall wo;
Nevirtheless to what parte shall I go
In hope to findin myne owne turtill true,
My liv'is joye, my soverain Lorde Jesu!

Sith all my joye, that I call his presence,
Is thus removed, now I am full of mone;
Alas the while I made no providence
For this mishap! wherefore I sigh and grone:
Succour to finde to what place might I gone!
Fain I would to some man my hertè breke;
I n'ot to whom I maie complain or speke.

Alone I stande full sorie and full sad,
Which hopid to have seen my Lorde and Kyng;
Small cause have I to be merie or glad
Remembryng this bittirful departyng:
In this worlde ne is no creture livyng
That was to me so gode and gracious,
His love also then golde more precious.

Full sore I sigh without comfort again,
There is no cure to my salvacion,
His brenning love my hert so doth constrain,
Alas, here is a wofull permutacion!
Wherof I finde no joye nor consolacion,
Therefore my pain all onely to confesse
With deth I fere woll ende my bevinesse.

This wo and anguiſh is intollerable;
If I bide here, liſe can I not ſuſtain,
If I go hence my paines be uncurable;
Where him to finde I knowe no place certain,
And thus I ne wote of theſe thingis twain
Whiche I maie take and which I maie refuſe:
My hert is wounded heron to thinke or muſe,
A while I ſhall ſtande in this morowning
In hope if any viſion would appere
That of my love might tell ſome gode tyding,
Whiche into joy might chaunge my wepyng cher;
I traſt in his grace and his mercy dere;
But at the leſt, though I therewith me kill,
I ſhall not ſpare to waile and wepe my fill.
And if that I die in ſoche avinture
I can no more but welcome as my chaunce;
My bones ſhal reſt here in this ſepulture;
My life, my deth, is at his ordinaunce;
It ſhal be tolde in laſting remembraunce:
Thus to departin is to me no ſhame,
And alſo thereof I 'am nothing to blame.
Hope againſt me ſo hath her courſe itake
That there is no more, but thus ſhall I die:
I ſe right well my Lorde hath me forſake,
But in my conceipt cauſe know I none why:
Although he be farre hence and nothing nye
Yet my wofull herte after hym doeth ſeke,
And cauſeth teres to ren doun by my cheke.
Thinking, alas! I have loſt his preſence,
Which in this worlde was all my ſuſtinaunce;
I crie and call with hertie diligence,
But there is no wight givith attendaunce,
Me to certifie of myne enquiraunce,
Wherefore I will to all this world bewraie
How that my Lorde is ſlain and born awaie.
Though that I mourne it ne is no grete wonder,
Sithe he is all my joye in ſpeciall;
And nowe I thinke we be ſo farre aſonder
That hym to ſe I fere nevir I ſhall;
It helpith no more aftir hym to call,
Ne after hym to' enquire in any coſte:
Alas! how is he thus ygone and loſt?
The Jewis I thinke full of miſerie,
Yſet in malice by ther buſy cure
With force and might of gilefull trecherie
Hath entermined my Lord'is ſepulture,
And borne awaie that precious figure,
Levyng of it nothyng; if thei' have doen ſo
Marrid I am; alas, what ſhall I do!
With ther vengeaunce inſaciable
Now have thei hym giltleſs entretid ſo
That to reporte it is to lamentable,
Thei bete his bodie from toppe to the toe,
Nevir man was yborne that felte ſoche woe;
Thei woundid hym, alas! with all grevaunce,
The blode doun reilid in moſt habundaunce;
The blodie rowis ſtremed doun ovir all,
Thei him aſſailid ſo maliciouſlie
With ther ſcourgis and ſtrokis beſtiall;
Thei ſparid not, but ſmote inceſſauntlie;
To ſatisfie ther malice thei were buſie:
Thei ſpit in his face, thei ſmote here and there;
He groned full ſore, and ſwete many a tere.

Thei crounid hym with thornis ſharpe and kene,
The vainis rent, the blode ran doun apace,
With blode ovircome were bothe his eyen,
And bolne with ſtrokis was his bleſſid face;
Thei hym entretid as men without grace,
Thei knelid to hym, and made many a ſcorne;
Like helhoundis they have hym all to torne:
Upon a mightie croſſe in length and brede
(Theſe turmentours ſhewid ther curſidneſſe)
Thei nailid hym without pitie or drede,
His precious blode braſt out in largèneſſe,
Thei ſtrained hym along as men mercileſſe;
The verie jointes all to myne apparence
Rived aſondir for ther greté violence.
All this I beholding with mine eyen twain
Stode there beſide with rufull attendaunce,
And er me thought he beyng in that pain
Lokid on me with dedly countinaunce,
As he' had ſaid in his ſpeciall remembraunce
Farwell Magdalen, depart muſt I nedes hens,
My herte is *tanquam cera liqueſcens.*
Whiche rufull ſight when that I gan beholde
Out of my witte I almoſte tho diſtraught,
I tare my here, my handis wrang and folde,
And of the ſight my hert dranke ſoche a draught
That many a fall ſwounyng there I caught;
I bruſed my bodie fallyng on the grounde,
Whereof I ſele many a grevous wounde.
Then theſe wretchis, full of all frowardneſſe,
Gave hym to drinke eiſell temprid with gall;
Alas! that poiſon full of bittirneſſe
My lov'is chere cauſid them to appall,
And yet thereof might he not drinke at all,
But ſpake theſe wordis, as him thought it beſt,
Fathir of hevin! *conſummatum eſt.*
Then knelid I doune in pain'is outrage,
Clipping the croſſe within myne armis twain,
His blode diſtillid doune on my viſage,
My clothis eke the droppis did diſtain;
To have dyid for hym I would full fain,
But what ſhoulde it availe if I did ſo
Sith he' is *ſuſpenſus in patibulo?*
And thus my Lorde full dere was all diſgiſed
With blode, and pain, and woundis many one,
His veinis braſt, his jointis all to rived,
Partyng aſondir the fleſhe fro the bone;
But I ſawe that he hing not there alone,
For *cum iniquis deputatus eſt,*
Not like a man but like a leprous beſt.
A blinde knight men ycallid Longias
With a ſpere aproched to my Sovèrain,
Lannſyng his ſide full pitouſlie, alas!
That his precious herte he clave in twain,
The purple blode eke fro the hertis vain
Doune railid right faſt in moſte rufull wiſe,
With chriſtal water brought fro Paradiſe.
When I behelde this wofull paſſion,
I wote not how, by ſodain avinture
My hert was perſed with very compaſſion,
That in me remained no life of nature,
Strokis of dethe I felt without meſure,
My deth'is wounde I caught with woe oppreſt,
And brought to point as my hert ſhuld ybreſt.

The wounde, the hert, and blode, of my darling
Shal never ſlide fro my memorial,
The byttir paines alſo of tourmenting
Within my ſoule be gravin principal;
The ſpere, alas! that was ſo ſharpe withall
So thrillid my herte, as to my feling,
That body and ſoule were at departing.

Sone as I might I releved up againe,
My brethe I coude not very wel reſtore,
Feling my ſelf drownid in ſo grete paine,
Both body' and ſoule me thought wer al to tore,
Violent fallis grevid me right ſore;
I wept, I bledde, and with my ſelfe I fared
As one that for his life nothing had cared.

I loking up unto that rufull rode
Sawe firſt the viſage pale of that figure,
But ſo pitous a ſight ſpottid with blode
Sawe nevir yet no living creâture;
So it excedid the boundes of meſure,
That mann'is minde with al his wittis five
Is nothing able that paine to diſcrive.

Than gan I there min armis to unbrace,
Up lifting my handis ful mourningly
I ſighid and ſore ſobbid in that place,
Both hevin and erthe might have herde me crie
Weping, and ſaid Alas! inceſſauntly,
Ah, my ſwete herte, my goſtly paramour!
Alas, I may nat thy body ſocour!

O bleſſid Lorde! how fierſe and how cruel
Theſe curſid wightis nowe hath the yſlaine,
Kerving, alas! thy body eviridel
Wounde within wounde, full byttir is thy pain;
Nowe wolde God that I might to the attaine
To naile my body faſt unto thy tre,
So that of this paine thou mightiſt go fre!

I can nat reporte ne make reherſaile
Of my demening with the circumſtaunce,
But wel I wote the ſpere with every naile
Thirlid my ſoule by inwarde reſemblaunce,
Which nevir ſhall out of my remembraunce;
During my life it woll cauſe me to waile
As ofte as I remembre that bataile.

Ah, ye Jewes! worſe than doggis rabiate,
What moved you thus cruilly him to' aray?
He nevir diſpleſed you, nor cauſed debate,
Your love and true hertes he conveytid aye;
He preched, he teched, he ſhewid the right way,
Wherfore ye lyke tyrantes wode and way-warde,
Nowe have him thus yſlaine for his rewarde.

Ye ought to' have remembrid one thing ſpecial,
His favour, grace, and his magnificence;
He was your prince borne, and lorde ovir all,
Howe be it ye toke him in ſmal reverence;
He was ful meke in ſuffring your offence,
Nertheleſs ye devoured him with one aſſent,
As hungry wolves doth the lambe innocent.

Where was your pite, 'o peple mercileſſe!
Arming your ſelfe with falſhed and treſon,
On my Lorde ye have ſhewid your wodeneſſe,
Like no men but beſtis without reſon;
Your malyce he ſuffrid for the reſon:
Your paine wol come, ne thinke it nat to ſlacke;
Man without mercy of mercy ſhal lacke.

O traitours and maintainirs of madneſſe!
Unto your foly' I aſcribe al my paine,
Ye have me deprived of joye and gladneſſe
So deling with my Lorde and ſoveraine;
Nothing ne ſhulde I nede thus to complaine
If he' had lived in pece and tranquillite
Whom ye have ſlaine through your iniquite.

Farewel, your nobleneſſe that ſomtime did raine!
Farewel your worſhip, your glory, and fame!
Hereaftir to lyve in hate and diſdaine
Marvaile ye not; for your treſpace and blame
Unto ſhame is tournid al your gode name:
Upon you now wol wondir every nation
As peple of a moſt vile reputation.

Theſe wickid wretchis, theſe houndes of hel,
As I have tolde plaine here in this ſentence,
Were not content my dere love thus to quel,
But yet they muſt embeſile his preſence,
As I perceive; by covert violence
They have him conveied to my diſpleſure,
For here is laſte but nakid ſepulture:

Wherfore of trouth and rightfull judgement,
That ther malice againe maye be acquited,
Aftir my verdite and aviſement,
Of falſe murdre they ſhullin be endited,
Of theft alſo, which ſhal not be reſpited,
And in al haſte they ſhal be hanged and drawe;
I wol my ſelfe plede this cauſe in the lawe.

Alas! yf I with a trewe attendaunce
Had ſtyl abiddin with my Lord'is corſe,
And kept it ſtil with trewe perſeveraunce,
Than had nat befal this woful devorſe;
But as for my paine welcome, and no force:
This ſhal be my ſonge where ſo er I go,
Departing is the grounde of al my wo.

I ſe right wel now in my painis ſmerte
There is no wounde of ſo grevous dolour
As is the woundè of my careful herte;
Sithin I have loſte thus my paramour
Al my ſwetneſſe is tournid into ſour;
Mirthe to my herte nothing ne maie convey
But he that bereth therof bothe locke and key.

The joye excellent of bliſſed Paradiſe
Maye me, alas! in no wiſe re-comforte,
Songe of angel nothing may me ſuffiſe,
As in min hertè nowe to make diſporte;
Al I refuſe but that I might reſorte
Unto my love, the wel of godelihede,
For whoſe longing I trowe I ſhal be ded.

Of painful labour and tourment corpo'ral
I ne make therof none excepcion,
Painis of hel I wol paſſe ovir al
My love to finde in myne affeccion;
So grete to him is my delectacion,
A thouſande timis martrid wolde I be
His bleſſid body ones if I might ſe.

About this worlde, ſo large in all compace,
I ſhal not ſpare to renne my life during,
My fete alſo ſhall not reſt in one place
Tyl of my love I may here ſome tiding,
For whoſe abſence my handis nowe I wring;
To thinke on him ceſe ſhal nevir my minde:
O gentill Jeſu! where ſhal I the finde?

Jernſalem I wol ſerche place fro place,
Sion, the Vale of Joſaphath alſo,
And if I finde him not in al this ſpace
By Mount Olivet to Beth'any woll I go;
Theſe waies wol I wandir and many mo,
Nazareth, Bethleem, Mauntana Jude;
No travaile ſhal me paine him for to ſe.
His bliſſid face if I might ſe and finde
Serche I wolde every coſte and countrey,
The ſardiſt parte of Egypt or hote Inde
Shulde he to me but a litil journey.
Howe is he thus gone or takin away!
If I knewe the ful trouth and certente
Yet from this care releſid might I be.
Into wildirneſſe I thinke beſt to go,
Sithe I can no more tidinges of him here,
There may I my lyfe ledin to and fro,
There may I dwel and to no man apere;
To towne ne village woll I not come nere;
Alone in wodes, in rockes, and in caves depe,
I may at mine owne will both waile and wepe.
Myn eyin twaine withoutin variaunce
Shal nevir ceſe, I promiſe faithfully,
There for to wepin with gret aboundaunce
Byttir teris renning inceſſauntly,
The whiche teris medlid ful petouſly
With the very blode er ſhall renne alſo,
Expreſſing in mine hert the grevous wo.
Worldely fode and ſuſtenaunce I deſire none,
Soche living as I finde ſoch wol I take,
Rotis that growin on the craggy ſtone
Shal me ſuffiſe, with watir of the lake;
Than thus may I ſay for my Lord'is ſake,
Fuerunt mihi lacrymæ meæ
In deſerto panes, die ac nocte.
My body to clothe it makith no force,
A mourning mantil ſhal be ſufficient,
The grevous woundis of his pitous corſe
Shal be to me a ful royal garnement,
He departid thus I am beſt content;
His croſſe with nailis and ſcourgis withal
Shal be my thought and paine eſpecial.
Thus wol I live, as I have here ytolde,
If I may any longe time endure,
But I fere Deth is ovir me ſo bolde
That of my purpoſe I can not be ſure;
My painis encreſin without meſure,
For of longe lyfe who can lav any reſon?
Al thing is mortal, and hath but a ſeſon.
I ſigh ful ſore, and it is ferre yſet;
Myne hert I fele now bledith inwardly,
The blody teres I may in no wiſe let;
Sithe of my paine I finde no remedye
I thank God of al if that I nowe dye;
His will perfourmid I holde me content;
My ſoule let him have that hath it me lent,
For lengir to' endure it 'is intollerable,
My woful herte is inflamid ſo huge,
That no ſorow to myne is comparable,
Sithe of my minde I ne finde no refuge,
Yet I him require as a rightful juge
To devoide fro me the inwarde ſorowe,
Leſt that I live not to the nexte morowe.
Within mine hert is impreſſid ful ſore
His royal forme, his ſhappe, his ſemelines,
His porte, his chere, his godenes evirmore,
His noble perſone, with al gentilnes;
He is the welle of allè parfitnes,
The very Redemir of al mankinde,
Him love I beſt with herte, and ſoule, and minde.
In his abſence my paines ful bittir be,
Right wel I may it fele nowe inwardely,
No wondir is though they hurte or ſle me,
They cauſin me to crie ſo rufully;
Myne herte oppreſſed is ſo wondirfully
Onely for him, which ſo is bright of ble,
Alas, I trowe I ſhal him nevir ſe!
My joye is tranſlate full ſarre in exile,
My myrthe is chaungid into paynis colde;
My lyfe I think endurith but a while;
Anguiſhe and paine is that that I beholde,
Wherfore my handis thus I wringe and folde;
Into this grave I loke, I cal, I pray,
Deth remainith and life is borne away.
Now muſt I walk and wandir here and there,
God wot to what partis I ſhal me dreſſe,
With quaking hert wepinge many a tere,
To ſeke out my love and all my ſwetnes;
I wolde he wyſt what mortal hevines
About min herte renewith more and more,
Than wolde he nat kepe pite long in ſtore.
Withoutin him I may not longe endure,
His love ſo ſore workith within my breſt,
And er I wepe before this ſepulture
Sighing ful ſore, as mine herte ſhulde ybreſt;
During my lyfe I ſhal obtaine no reſt,
But mourne and wepe where that evir I go,
Making complaint of al my mortal wo.
Faſt I crie, but there is no audience,
My comming hidir was him for to pleſe,
My ſoule oppreſt is here with his abſence;
Alas, he liſt not ſet mine herte in eſe!
Wherfore to paine my ſelfe with al diſeſe
I ſhal not ſpare tyl he take me to grace,
Or ellis I ſhal ſterve here in this place.
But onis if that I might with him ſpeke
It were al my joy, with parfite pleſaunce;
So that I might to him myne herte breke
I ſhulde anone devoide al my grevaunce,
For he' is the bliſſe of very recreaunce;
But now, alas! I can nothing do ſo,
For in ſtede of joy naught have I but wo.
His noble corſe within min hert'is rote
Depe is ygravid, whiche ſhal nevir ſlake;
Nowe is he gone, to what place I ne wote,
I mourne, I wepe, and al is for his ſake:
Sithin he is paſte here a vowe I make
With hertely promiſe, and therto me binde,
Nevir to ceſe til that I may him finde.
Unto his mothir I thinke for to go,
Of her haply ſome comforte may I take;
But one thinge yet me ſerith and no mo,
Yf that I any mencion of him make
Of my wordis ſſe wolde trimble and quake;
And who coude her blame, ſhe having but one!
The ſonne borne away the mothir wol mone.

Sorowes many hath she suffrid trewly
Sith that she first conceivid him and bare,
And sevin thinges there be most specially
That drownith her hert in sorowe and care,
Yet lo! in no wise maye they not compare
With this one now, the whiche if that she knew
She wolde her painis everichone renewe.
Gret was her sorowe by mennis saiyng
Whan in the temple Simeon Justus
Shewid to her these wordis, propheslyng,
Tuam animam pertransibit gladius;
Also whan Herode, that tyraunt furious,
Her childe pursuid in every place;
For his life went neithir mercy ne grace.
She mournid sore whan that she knewe him gone;
Full longe she sought or she him founde ayen;
Whan he went to deth his crosse him upon
It was to her sight a full rewful paine;
Whan he hong theron betwene thevis twaine,
And the spere unto his herte thrust was right,
She swounid, and to the grounde there ypight:
Whan ded and blody in her lappe lay
His blissed body, bothe handes and fete al tore,
She cryid out and said, Now, welaway!
Thus arayid was nevir man before:
Whan hast was made his body to be bore
Unto sepulture here for to remaine
Unnethis for wo she coude her sustaine.
The sorowes sevin like swerdes every one
His mothir's herte woundid fro syde to syde,
But if she knewe her sonnè thus ygone,
Out of this worlde she shuld with deth yride,
For care she coude no lengir here abide,
Having no more joy nor consolacioun
Than I here standing in this stacioun:
Wherfore her to se I dare nat presume;
Fro her presence I wol my selfe refraine;
Yet had I levir to dye and consume
Than his mothir shulde have any more paine,
Nethèles her sonne I wolde se ful faine;
His presence was very joye and swetnes,
His absence is but sorowe' and hevinesse.
There is no more, sith I may him nat mete
Whom I desire above al othir thing;
Nede I must take the souir with the swete,
For of 'his noble corse I here no tiding;
Ful ostin I crie, and my handis wring.
Myne herte, alas! relentith al in paine,
Whiche wol ybrastin both sinewe and vaine.
Alas, howe' unhappy was this woful hour
Wherin is thus mispendid my service!
For min entent and eke my true labour
To none effecte may come in any wise;
Alas! I thinke if he do me dispise,
And list not take my simple observaunce,
There is no more, but deth is my finaunce.
I have him called, *sed non respondet mihi*,
Wherfore my mirth is tournid to mourning;
O, my dere Lord! *quid mali feci tibi*,
That me to comforte I finde no' erthly thing?
Alas! have compassion of my criyng;
Yf fro me *faciem tuam abscondis*
There is no more but *consumere me vis.*

Within myne hert is groundid thy figure,
That al this world'is horrible tourment
May' it not aswage, it' is so without mesure,
It is so brenning, it is so fervent:
Remembir, Lorde, I have ben diligent
Evir the to plese onely and no mo;
Myne herte is with the where so er I go.
Therfore, my dere darling! *trahe me post te*,
And lette me not standin thus desolate;
Quia non est qui consoletur me,
Myne herte for the is so disconsolate,
My paines also nothing me moderate;
Nowe if it list the to speke with me' alyve
Come in hast; my herte asondir will rive.
To the I profir, lo! my pore service,
The for to plese astir mine owne entent;
I offre' here, as in devout sacrifice,
My boxe replete with precious oyntment,
Myne eyin twaine weping sufficient,
Myne herte with anguishe fulfilled is, alas!
My soule eke redy for love out to pas.
Naught ellis have I the to plese or pay,
For if min herte were golde or precious stone
It shulde be thine without any delay,
With hertely chere thou shulde have it anone,
Why suffrist thou me than to stande alone?
Thou hast I trowe my weping in disdaine,
Or els thou knowist nat what is my paine.
If thou withdrawe thy noble daliaunce
For ought that evir I displesid the,
Thou knowest right wel it is but ignoraunce,
And of no knowlege for a certainte;
If I' have offendid, Lorde, forgive it me;
Gladde I am for to make ful repentaunce
Of all thing that hath ben to thy grevaunce.
Myne herte, alas! swellith within my brest,
So sore oppress with anguishe and with payne,
That al to pecis forsothe it wol brest
But if I se thy blyssid corse againe;
For lyse ne deth I can nat me refraine:
If that thou make delay thou maist be sure
Myne hert wol lepe into this sepulture.
Alas, my Lorde, why farest thou thus with me!
My tribulacion yet have in minde;
Where is thy mercy? where is thy pite?
Whiche evir I trustid in the to finde:
Sometime thou were to me both gode and kinde;
Lette it plese the my prayir to accept,
Whiche with my teris I have here bewept.
On me thou oughtist to have very routh,
Sith for the onely is al this mourning,
For sith I to the plightid firste my trouthe,
I nevir varyid with discording,
And that knowist thou best my owne darling!
Why constrainist thou me thus for to wayle?
My wo forsothe can the nothing availe.
I have endurid without variaunce,
Right as thou knowst, thy lovir just and trew,
With hert and thought aye at thyn ordinaunce,
Lyke to the saphire, alwaye in one hewe;
I nevir woulde chaungin the for no newe:
Why withdrawist thou the fro my presence,
Sithins al my thought is for thine absence?

With hert intier, ſwete Lorde! I cric to the,
Encline thine eres to my peticioun,
And come *velociter exaudi me;*
Remembre mine hert'is diſpoſicioun,
It may not endure in this condicioun,
Therfore out of theſe paines *libera me,*
And where thou arte *pone me juxta te.*

Let me beholde, o Jeſu! thy bliſſed face,
Thy faire thy glorious angelike viſage;
Bowe thine eris to my complaint, alas!
For to convey me out of this wode rage:
Alas, my Lorde! take fro me this dommage;
To my deſire for mercy condiſcende,
For non but thou may my grevaunce amende.

Now yet, gode Lorde! I the beſech and pray,
As thou raiſid my brothir Lazarous
From deth to life, that upon the fourth day
Came ayen in body and ſoule precious,
As gret a thing maiſt thou ſhewe unto us
Of thy ſelf by powir of thy godhed
As thou dyd of him lyinge in grave ded.

Myne hert is woundid with thy charite,
It brenneth, it flamith, inceſſauntly;
Come, my dere Lorde! *ad adjuvandum me;*
Nowe be not longe, my paine to multiplie,
Leſt in the mene time I departe and die:
In thy grace I put hope and confidence
To do as pleſith thy magnificence.

Flodis of dethe and tribulacioun
Into my ſoule I fele entrid ful depe,
Alas, that here' is no conſolacioun!
Evir I waile, evir I mourne and wepe,
And ſorow hath woundid myn hert ful depe:
O dere love! no marvaile though that I die,
Sagittæ tuæ infixæ ſunt mihi.

Wandringe in this place, as in wildirneſſe,
No comforte have I ne yet aſſuraunce,
Deſolate of joys, replete with faintneſſe,
No' anſwere receving of mine enquiraunce,
Myne herte alſo grevid with diſpleſaunce,
Wherfore I may ſaye, *O Deus, Deus!*
Non eſt dolor ſicut dolor meus.

Myne hert expreſſith *quod dilexi multum,*
I may nat endure although I wold faine,
For now *ſolum ſupereſt ſepulchrum,*
I know it right wel by my hugè paine,
And thus for love I may not life ſuſtaine;
But, o my God! I muſe what aylith the,
Quod ſic repente præcipitas me.

Alas! I ſe' it wil none othiswiſe be,
Nowe muſt I take my leve for evirmore,
This ſore paine hath almoſt diſcomfite me,
My love's corſe I can in no wiſe reſtore;
Alayté this wo that er I was bore!
Here at this tombe nowe muſt I die and ſtarve,
Deth is aboutin my hert for to carve.

My teſtament I wol begin to make;
To God the Fathir my ſoule I commende,
To Jeſu my love, that died for my ſake,
My herte and al both I gyve and yſende,
In whoſe dere love my lyfe ymakith ende,
My body alſo to this monument
Here bequeth, bothe boxe and oyntement,

Of al my willes, lo! nowe I make the laſt;
Right in this place within this ſepulture
I woll be buried whan I'm ded and paſt,
And on my grave I wol have this ſcripture,
Here within reſtith a goſtly creture,
Chriſtis true lovir, Mary Magdaleine,
Whoſe harte for love ybracke in pecis twaine.

Ye vertuous women, tendir of nature,
Ful of pite and of compaſſion,
Reſorte I pray you to my ſepulture
To ſinge my dirge with grete devocion,
Shewe your charite' in this condicion;
Sing with pite and let your hertis wepe,
Remembring I am ded, and layd to ſlepe:

Than whan that ye begin to parte me fro,
And endid have your mourning obſervaunce,
Remembre where ſo evir that ye go
Alway to ſerche and make due enquiraunce
Aftir my love, mine hert'is ſuſtinaunce,
In every towne and in every village,
If ye may here of his noble ymage;

And if it happe by any grace at laſte
That ye my trew love finde in any coſt,
Say that his Magdaleine is ded and paſte,
For his pure love hath yeldid up the goſt;
Say that of al thing I lovid him moſt,
And that I ne might not this deth eſchewe,
My painis ſo ſore dyd evir renewe.

And in tokin of love perpetual,
Whan I am buried in this place preſent,
Take out myne hert, the very rote and al,
And cloſe it within this boxe of oyntment,
To my dete love make therof a preſent,
Kneling downe with wordis lamentable
Do your meſſage, ſpeke faire and tretable:

Say that to him my ſelfin I commende
A thouſand timis, and with herte ſo fre
This povir tokin ſay to him I ſende,
Pleſith his godeneſſe to take it in gre,
It is his owne of right, it is his ſe,
Whiche he aſkid whan he ſaid longe before
Gyve me thy hert and I deſire no more.

Adue, my Lorde! my love ſo faire of face!
Adue, my turtle dove ſo freſhe of hue!
Adue, my mirthe! adue, al my ſolace!
Adue, alas! my Saviour Lorde Jeſu!
Adue, the gentilliſt that er I knewe!
Adue, my moſt excellent paramour!
Fairir than roſe, ſwetir than lylly flour!

Adue, my hope of pleſure eternal!
My lyfe, my welth, and my proſperite!
Mine herte of golde, my perle oriental!
Myne adamant of parfite charite!
My chefe refuge and my felycite!
My comforte and my recreacioun!
Farewel, my perpetual ſalvacioun!

Farewel, mine emperour celeſtial!
And moſt beautiful prince of al mankinde!
Adue, my Lord! of hert moſte lyberal!
Farewel, my ſwetiſt bothe ſoule and minde!
So loving a ſpouſe ſhal I nevir finde!
Adue, my ſoveraine, very gentilman!
Farewel, dere herte! as hertely as I can.

Thy wordes eloquente flowinge in ſwetneſſe
Shal no more, alas! my minde recomforte,
Wherfore my life muſt ende in bittirneſſe,
For in this worlde ſhal I nevir reſorte
To the, whiche was mine hevinly diſporte;
I ſe, alas! it wol none othir be:
Nowe farewel, the grounde of al dignite!
Adue, the fairiſt that evir was bore!
Alas, I may nat ſe your bleſſid face!
Nowe welaway that I ſhal ſe no more
Thy bleſſid viſage, ſo replete with grace,
Wherin is printid my parfite ſolace!
Adue, mine hert'is rote and al for ever!
Nowe ſarith wel, I muſt from the diſcever!
My ſoule for anguiſhe is nowe ful thruſty;
I faint, I faint, right ſore for hevines;
My Lorde, my ſpouſe! *cur me dereliquiſti?*
Sith I for the ſuffre al this diſtreſſe
What cauſith the to ſeme thus mercileſſe?
Sith it the pleſeth of me to make an ende
In manus tuas my ſpirite I commende.

THE FLOURE AND THE LEAFE.

WRITTEN BY GEOFFERY CHAUCER.

THE ARGUMENT.

A gentlewoman out of an arbour in a grove ſeeth a great company of knights and ladies in a dance upon the green graſs, the which being ended, they all kneel down and do honour to the daiſie, ſome to the Flower, and ſome to the Leaf: afterward this gentlewoman learneth by one of theſe ladies the meaning hereof, which is this; they which honour the Flower, a thing fading with every blaſt, are ſuch as look after beauty and wordly pleaſure, but they that honour the Leaf, which abideth with the root notwithſtanding the froſts and winter ſtorms, are they which follow virtue and during qualities, without regard of worldly reſpects.

WHEN that Phœbus his chair of gold ſo hie
Had whirlid up the ſterrie ſky aloft,
And in the Bole was entrid certainly,
When ſhouris ſote of rain deſcendid ſoft,
Cauſing the ground ſchè timis and oft
Up for to give many an wholeſome air,
And every plain was yclothid faire
With newè grene, and makith ſmalè flours
To ſpringin here and there in field and mede,
So very gode and wholeſome be the ſhours,
That they renewin that was old and dede
In wintir time, and out of every ſede
Springith the herbè, ſo that every wight
Of this ſeſon wexith richt glade and licht;
And I ſo gladè of the ſeſon ſwete,
Was happid thus; upon a certain night
As I lay in my bed ſlepe full unmete
Was unto me, but why that I ne might
Reſt I ne wiſt, for there n'as erthly wight
[As I ſuppoſe] had more of hertis eſe
Than I, for I n'ad ſickneſſe nor diſeſe;

Wherefore I mervaile gretly of my ſelf
That I ſo long withoutin ſlepè lay,
And up I roſe thre houris aftir twelfe,
About the ſpringing of the gladſome day,
And on I put my gear and mine aray,
And to a pleſaunt grove I gan to pas
Long or the bright ſonnè upriſin was,
In which were okis grete, ſtreight as a line,
Undir the which the graſs ſo freſhe of hew
Was newly ſprong, and an eight fote or nine
Every tre well fro his fellow grew,
With braunchis brode ladin with levis new,
That ſprongin out agen the ſonnè ſhene,
Some very rede, and ſome a glad light grene,
Which [as me thought] was a right pleſaunt ſight;
And eke the birdis ſongis for to here
Would have rejoiſid any erthly wight,
And I, that couth not yet in no manere
Herin the nightingale of all the yere,
Full buſily herk'nid with hert and ere
If I her voice perceve could any where:

And at the laſt a path of litil brede
I found, that gretly had not uſid be,
For it forgrowin was with graſs and wede,
That well unnethis a wight might it ſe;
Thought I, this path ſome whidir doth parde;
And ſo I followid till it me brought
To a right pleſaunt herbir wel ywrought,
Which that benchid was, and with turfis new
Freſhly turvid, whereof the grenè graſs
So ſmall, ſo thick, ſo ſhort, ſo freſh of hew,
That moſt like to grene woll wot I it was;
The hegge alſo, that yedin in compas,
And clofid in allè the grene herbere,
With ſycamor was ſet and eglatere
Within, in fere ſo well and cunningly,
That every braunch and lefe grew by meſure
Plain as a bord, of an height by and by;
I ſe nevir a thing [I you enſure]
So well ydone, for he that toke the cure
It for to make [I trowe] did all his peine
To make it pas all tho that men have ſeine.
And ſhapin was this herber roſe and all
As is a pretty parlour, and alſo
The hegge as thick as is a caſtil wall,
That who that liſt without to ſtond or go,
Thogh he wold all day pryin to and fro
He ſhould not ſe if there were any wight
Within or no, but one within well might
Perceve all tho that ydin there without
Into the field, that was on every ſide
Cover'd with corn and graſs, that out of doubt
Tho one would ſekin all the worldè wide
So rich a feldè could not be eſpyde
Upon no coſt, as of the quantity,
For of allè gode thing there was plenty.
And I, that all theſe pleſaunt ſightis ſe,
Thought ſuddainly I felt ſo ſwete an air
Of the eglenter, that certainly
There is no hert [I deme] in ſuch diſpair,
Ne yet with thoughtis froward and contraire
So overlaid, but it ſhould ſone have bote
If it had onis felt this ſavour ſote.
And as I ſtode and caſt aſide mine eye
I was ware of the fairiſt medler tre
That evir yet in all my life I ſe,
As full of bloſſomis as it might be,
Therein a goldfinch leping pretily
From bough to bough, and as him liſt he ete
Here and there of buddis and flouris ſwete.
And to the herbir ſide was adjoyning
This fairiſt tre of which I have you told,
And at the laſt the bird began to ſing
[Whan he had etin what he etin would]
So paſſing ſwetely that by many fold
It was more pleſaunt than I couth deviſe;
And whan his ſong was endid in this wiſe
The nightingale with ſo mery a note
Anſwerid him, that alle the wode yrong
So ſodainly, that as it were a ſote
I ſtode aſtonied, and was with the ſong
Thorow raviſhid, that till late and long
I ne wiſt in what place I was ne where,
Ayen methought ſhe ſong e'en by mine ere:
Wherefore I waited about buſily
On every ſide if I her might ſe,
And at the laſt I gan full well eſpy
Where ſhe ſate in a freſh grene laury tre,
On the furthir ſide evin right by me,
That gave ſo paſſing a delicious ſmell,
According to the eglantere full well;
Whereof I had ſo inly grete pleſure,
As methought I ſurely raviſhid was
Into Paradiſe, wherein my deſire
Was for to be, and no ferthir to pas
As for that day, and on the ſotè graſs
I ſat me down, for as for mine entent
The birdis ſong was more convenient
And more pleſaunt to me by many fold
Than mete or drink, or any othir thing,
Thereto the herbir was ſo freſh and cold,
The wholſome ſavours eke ſo comforting,
That [as I demid] ſith the beginning
Of the worldè was nevir ſeen er than
So pleſaunt a ground of none erthly man.
And as I ſat the birdis herkening thus,
Methought that I herd voicis ſuddainly,
The moſt ſwetiſt and moſt delicious
That evir any wight I trow trewly
Herdin in ther life, for the armony
And ſwete accord was in ſo gode muſike
That the voicis to angels moſt were like.
At the laſt out of a grove evin by
[That was right godely and pleſaunt to ſight]
I ſe where there came ſinging luſtily
A world of ladies, but to tell aright
Ther beauty grete lyith not in my might,
Ne ther array; nevirthèleſs I ſhall
Tell you a part, tho' I ſpeke not of all:
The ſurcots white of velvet well fitting
They werin clad, and the ſemis eche one,
As it werin a mannir garniſhing,
Was ſet with emeraudis one and one
By and by, but many a richè ſtone
Was ſet on the purfilis out of dout
Of collours, ſleves, and trainis, round about;
As of grete perlis round and orient,
And diamondis fine and rubys red,
And many othir ſtone of which I went
The namis now; and everich on her hede
A rich fret of gold, which withoutin drede
Was full of ſtately rich ſtonys ſet,
And every lady had a chapelet
On ther hedis of braunchis freſh and grene,
So wele ywrought, and ſo marvelouſly,
That it was a right noble ſight to ſene,
Some of laurir, and ſome full pleſauntly
Had chapèlets of wodebind, and ſadly
Some of agnus caſtus werin alſo,
Chaplets freſh; but there were many of tho
That dauncid and eke ſong full ſobirly,
But all they yede in maner of compace;
But one there yede in mid the company
Sole by herſelf; but all follow'd the pace
That ſhe kept, whoſe hevinly figured face
So pleſaunt was, and her wele ſhape perſon,
That of beauty ſhe paſt them everichone,

And more richly beſeen by manyfold
The was alſo in every manir thing;
Upon her hede full pleſaunt to behold
A coron of gold rich for any king,
A braunch of agnus caſtus eke bering
In her hand, and to my ſight trewily
She lady was of all the company;
And ſhe began a roundell luſtily
That *Sus le foyle de vert moy* men call
Sinc' & mon joly cœur eſt endormy,
And than the company anſwerid all,
With voicis ſwete entunid and ſo ſmall,
That methought it the ſweteſt melody
That evir I herd in my life ſothly.
And thus they all came dauncing and ſinging
Into the middis of the mede echone
Before the herbir where I was ſitting,
And God wot I thought I was well bigone,
For than I might aviſe them one by one
Who fairiſt was, who beſt could dance or ſing,
Or who moſt womanly was in all thing.
They had not dauncid but a little throw
When that I herd not fer of ſodainly
So grete a noiſe of thundering trumpis blow
As though it ſhould have departid the ſkie,
And aftir that within a while I ſie
From the ſame grove where the ladies came out
Of men of armis coming ſuch a rout
As all men on erth had ben aſſemblid,
On that place well horſid for the nonis,
Stering ſo faſt that all the erth tremblid;
But for to ſpeke of richis and ſtonis,
And men and horſe, I trow the large wonis
Of Pretir John, ne all his treſory,
Might not unneth have bought the tenth party.
Of their array whoſo liſt to here more,
I ſhall reherſe ſo as I can a lite,
Out of the grove that I ſpeke of before
I ſe come firſt, all in their clokis white,
A company that wore for ther delite
Chapèlets freſh of okis ſerial
But newly ſprong, and trumpets were they all;
On every trump hanging a brode bannere
Of fine tartarium, full richly bete,
Every trumpet his lord'is armis bere
About ther neckis, with grete perlis ſete,
Collaris brode, for coſt they wou'd not lete,
As it would ſeem, for ther ſcuchons echone
Were ſet about with many a precious ſtone;
Ther horſis harneis was all white alſo;
And aftir them next in one company
Camin kingis at armis and no mo,
In clokis of white cloth with gold richly,
Chaplets of grene on ther heds on hye,
The crownis that they on ther ſcotchons bere
Were ſet with perl, and ruby, and ſaphere,
And eke grete diamondis many one;
But all ther horſis harneis and other gere
Was in a ſute according everichone,
As ye have herd the foreſaid trumpets were,
And by ſeming they were nothing to lere,
And ther guiding they did ſo manirly;
And aftir them came a gret company
Of heraudeis and purſevauntis eke,
Arrayid in clothis of white velvet,
And hardily they were nothing to ſeke
How they on them ſhouldin the harneis ſet,
And every man had on a chapèlet,
Scotchonis and eke horſe harneis in dede
They had in ſute of them that 'fore them yede.
Next after theſe appere in armour bright,
All ſave ther hedis, ſemely knightis nine,
And every claſp and nail, as to my ſight,
Of ther harneis were of red gold ſo fine,
With cloth of gold, and furrid with ermine,
Were the tappouris of their ſtedis ſtrong,
Both wide and large, that to the ground did hong;
And every boſs of bridle and paitrel
That they had on was worth, as I would wene,
A thouſand pound; and on ther hedis well
Dreſſid were crounis of the laurir grene,
The beſt ymade that evir I had ſene;
And every knight had aftir him riding
Thre henchmen, ſtill upon him awaiting;
Of which every (firſt) on a ſhort trunchon
His lord'is helmet bore ſo richly dight
That the worſt of them was worth the ranſoune
Of any king; the ſecond a ſhield bright
Bare at his back; the thred barin upright
A mighty ſpere, full ſharp yground and kene,
And every child ware of levis grene
A freſh chap'let upon his hairis bright;
And clokis white of fine velvet they were,
Ther ſtedis trappid and arayid right,
Without difference as ther lordis were;
And aftir them on many' a freſh courſere
There came of armid knightis ſuch a rout
That they beſprad the large field about;
And all they werin, aftir ther degrees,
Chappèlets new, or made of laurir grene,
Or ſome of oke, or ſome of othir trees,
Some in ther hondis barin boughis ſhene,
Some of laurir, and ſome of okis bene,
Some of hawthorne, and ſome of the wodebind,
And many mo which I have not in mind.
And ſo they came ther horſe freſhly ſtirring
With bloudy ſownis of ther trompis loud;
There ſe I many' an uncouth diſguiſing
In the array of thilke knightis proud;
And at the laſt as evenly as they coud
They toke ther place in middis of the mede,
And every knight turnid his horſis hede
To his felow, and lightly laid a ſpere
Into the reſt, and ſo juſtis began
On ev'ery part aboutin here and there; [man,
Some brake his ſpere, ſome threw down horſe and
About the felde aſtray the ſtedis ran;
And to behold their rule and govirnaunce
I you enſure it was a grete pleſaunce.
And ſo the juſtis laſt an hour and more,
But tho that crownid were in laurir grene
Did win the priſe; their dintis were ſo ſore
That there was none agenſt them might ſuſtene,
And the juſting allè was left off clene;
And fro ther horſe the nine alight anon,
And ſo did all the remnaunt everichone,

And forth they yede togidir twain and twain,
That to behold it was a worthy ſight,
Toward the ladies on the grenè plain,
That ſong and dauncid, as I ſaid now right;
The ladies as ſone as they godely might
They brakin off both the ſong and the daunce,
And yede to mete them with full glad ſemblaunce:
And every lady toke full womanly
By the hond a knight, and ſo forth they yede
Unto a faire laurir that ſtode faſt by,
With levis laid, the boughis of grete brede,
And to my dome ther nevir was indede
A man that had ſene half ſo faire a tre,
For undirneth it there might well have be
An hundrid perſons at ther own pleſaunce
Shadowid fro the hete of Phœbus bright,
So that they ſhouldin have felt no grevaunce
Neithir for rain, ne haile, that them hurt might;
The ſavour eke rejoice would any wight
That hed be ſick or melancholious,
It was ſo very gode and vertuous.
And with grete rev'rence they enclinid low
Unto the tre ſo ſote and fair of hew,
And aftir that within a litil throw
They all began to ſing and daunce of new;
Some ſong of love, ſome plaining of untrew,
Environing the tre that ſtode upright,
And evir yede a lady and a knight.
And at the laſt I caſt mine eie aſide,
And was ware of a luſty company
That came roming out of the feldè wide,
And hond in hond a knight and a lady,
The ladies all in ſurcotes, that richly
Purfilid were with many a rich ſtone,
And every knight of grene ware mantlis on,
Embroulid wele, ſo as the ſurcots were,
And everich had a chapelet on her hed,
[Which did right wele upon the ſhining here]
Makid of godely flouris white and red,
The knightis eke that they in hondè led
In ſute of them ware chaplets everichone,
And before them went minſtrels many one,
As harpis, pipis, lutis, and ſautry,
Allè in grene, and on ther hedis bare
Of diverſe flouris made full craftily,
All in a ſute, godely chaplets they ware,
And ſo dauncing into the mede they fare,
In mid the which they found a tuft that was
All ovirſprad with flouris in compas,
Whereto they enclined evèrichone
With grete revèrence, and that full humbly;
And at the laſt there tho began anon
A lady for to ſing right womanly
A bargaret in praiſing the daiſie,
For (as methought) among her notis ſwete
She ſaid *Si douce eſt la Margarete!*
Then they allè anſwerid her in fere
So paſſingly well and ſo pleſauntly,
That it was a moſt blisfull noiſe to here;
But I 'not how it happid, ſodainly
As about none the ſonn'ſo fervently
Waxe hotè that the pretty tendir floures
Had loſt the beauty of their freſh collours.
For ſhronke with hete the ladies eke to brent,
That they ne wiſt where they them might beſtow,
The knightis ſwelt, for lack of ſhade nie ſhent,
And aftir that within a litil throw
The wind began ſo ſturdily to blow
That down goth all the flowris everichone,
So that in all the mede there laſt not one,
Save ſuch as ſuccoured were among the leves
Fro every ſtorme that mightè them aſſaile,
Growing undir the heggis and thick greves;
And aftir that there came a ſtorme of haile
And rain in fere, ſo that withoutin faile
The ladies ne the knightis n'ade o' thred
Dry on them, ſo drooping wet was ther wede.
And when the ſtorme was clene paſſid away
Tho in the white, that ſtode undir the tre,
They felt nothing of all the grete affray
That they in grene without had in ybe;
To them they yede for routh and for pite,
Them to comfort aftir their grete diſeſe,
So fain they were the helpleſſe for to eſe.
Than I was ware how one of them in grene
Had on a coron rich and well-fitting,
Wherefore I demid well ſhe was a quene,
And tho in grene on her were awaiting;
The ladies then in white that were coming
Towardis them, and the knightis in fere,
Began to comfort them and make them chere.
The quene in white, that was of grete beauty,
Toke by the honde the quene that was in grene,
And ſeidè, Suſtir, I have grete pity
Of your annoy and of your troublous tene
Wherein ye and your company have bene
So long, alas! and if that it you pleſe
To go with me I ſhall do you the eſe
In al the pleſure that I can or may;
Whereof that othir, humbly as ſhe might,
Thankid her, for in right evil array
She was with ſtorme and hete I you behight;
And evèry lady then anon right
That were in white one of them toke in grene
By the hond, which when the knightis had ſene
In like manir eche of them toke a knight
Clad in the grene, and forth with them they fare
To an heggè, where that they anon right
To makin theſe juſtis they would not ſpare
Boughis to hew down, and eke trees to ſquare,
Wherewith they made them ſtately ſiris grete
To dry ther clothis, that were wringing wete;
And aftir that of herbis that there grew
They made for bliſtirs of the ſonne brenning
Ointmentis very gode, wholſome and new,
Where that they yede the ſick faſt anointing;
And aftir that they yede about gadring
Pleſant ſaladis, which they made them ete
For to refreſhe ther grete unkindely hete.
The lady of the Leſè then gan to pray
Her of the Floure [for ſo to my ſeming
They ſhould be callid as by ther array]
To ſoupe with her, and eke for any thing
That ſhe ſhould with her all her pepill bringe,
And ſhe ayen in right godely manere
Thankith her faſt of her moſt frendly chere.

Saying plainely that ſhe would obay
With all her hert all her commandement;
And then anon without lengir delay
The lady of the Leſe hath one yſent
To bring a palfray aftir her intent,
Arrayid wele in fair harneis of gold,
For nothing lackid that to him long ſhold:
And aftir that to all her company
She made to purvey horſe and every thing
That they nedid, and then full haſtily
Even by the herbir where I was ſitting
They paſſid all, ſo merrily ſinging
That it would have comfortid any wight:
But then I ſe a paſſing wondir ſight,
For then the nightingale, that all the day
Had in the laurir ſete, and did her might
The whole ſervice to ſing longing to May,
All ſodainly began to take her flight,
And to the lady of the Leſe forthright
She flew, and ſet her on her hand ſoftly,
Which was a thing I mervail'd at gretly.
The goldfinch eke, that fro the medlar tre
Was fled for hete unto the buſhis cold,
Unto the lady of the Flowre gan fle,
And on her hond he ſet him as he wold,
And pleſauntly his wingis gan to fold,
And for to ſing they peine them both as ſore
As they had do of all the day before.
And ſo theſe ladies rode forth a grete pace,
And all the rout of knightis eke in fere;
And I that had ſene all this wondir caſe
Thought that I would aſſay in ſome manere
To know fully the trouth of this mattere,
And what they were that rode ſo pleſauntly:
And when they were the herbir paſſid by
I dreſt me forth, and happid mete anon
A right fair lady, I do you enſure,
And ſhe came riding by her ſelf alone,
Alle in white, with ſemblaunce full demure;
I her ſalued, bad her gode avinture
More her befall, as I coud moſt humbly,
And ſhe anſwered, My doughtir, gramercy!
Madame, quoth I, if that I durſt enquere
Of you, I wold fain of that company
Wit what they be that paſſed by this harbere.
And ſhe ayen anſwerid right frendly,
My doughtir, all tho that paſſid hereby
In white clothing be ſervants everichone
Unto the Leſe, and I my ſelf am one.
Se ye not her that crownid is (quod ſhe)
Alle in white? Madame, then quod I, Yes.
That is Dian, goddeſs of Chaſtity,
And for bicauſe that ſhe a maidin is
Into her hond the branch ſhe berith this
That agnus caſtus men call propirly;
And all the ladies in her company
Where ye ſe of that herbe chaplets were
Be ſuch as han alwey kept maidinhede,
And all they that of laurir chaplets bere
Be ſuch as hardy were in manly dede,
Victorious, name which nevir may be dede
And all they were ſo worthy of their honde
In their time that no one might them withſtonde;
And tho that were chapèlets on ther hede
Of freſh wodebind be ſuch as nevir were
To Love untrue in word, in thought, ne dede,
But ay ſtedfaſt, ne for pleſance ne fere,
Tho that they ſhulde ther hertis all to tere,
Woud never flit, but evir were ſtedfaſt
Till that ther livis there aſſundir braſt.
Now, fair Madam! quod I, yet woud I pray
Your ladiſhip [if that it mightin be]
That I might knowe by ſome manir of wey,
Sithin that it hath likid your beaute
The trouth of theſe ladies for to tell me,
What that theſe knightis be in rich armour,
And what tho be in grene and were the Flour,
And why that ſome did rev'rence to the tre,
And ſome unto the plot of flouris fair?
With right gode wil, my doughtir fair! quod ſhe,
Sith your deſire is gode and debonaire:
Tho nine crounid be very exemplaire
Of all honour longing to chivalry,
And thoſe certain be clept The Nine Worthy
Which that ye may ſe riding all before,
That in ther time did many' a noble dede,
And for ther worthineſs full oft have bore
The crown of laurir levis on ther hede,
As ye may in your oldè bokis rede,
And how that he that was a conqueror
Had by laurir alwey his moſt honour:
And tho that barin bowes in ther hond
Of the precious laurir ſo notable
Be ſuch as were [I woll ye undirſtond]
Moſt noble Knightis of The Round Table,
And eke the Douſeperis honourable,
Which they bere in the ſign of victory,
As witneſs of ther dedis mightily:
Eke ther be Knightis old of the Gartir,
That in ther timis did fight worthily,
And the honour they did to the laurir
Is for by it they have ther laud wholly,
Ther triumph eke and martial glory,
Which unto them is more perfite riches
Than any wight imagin can or geſſe;
For one Leſe givin of that noble tre
To any wight that hath done worthily
[An it be done ſo as it ought to be]
Is more honour than any thing erthly,
Witneſs of Rome, that foundir was truly
Of all knighthode and dedis marvelous,
Record I take of Titus Livius.
And as for her that crounid is in grene,
It is Flora, of theſe flouris goddeſſe,
And all that here on her awaiting bene
Ît are ſuch folk that lovid idleneſſe,
And not delite in no kind beſineſſe
But for to hunt, and hawke, and pley in medes,
And many othir ſuch like idle dedes.
And for the grete delite and the pleſaunce
They have to the Flour, and ſo reverently
They unto it doin ſuch obeiſaunce,
As ye may ſe. Now, fair Madame! quod I,
[If I durſt aſk] what is the cauſe and why
That knightis have the enſigne of honour
Rathir by the Leſe than by the Flour?

Sothly, doughtir, quod ſhe, this is the trouth,
For knightes evir ſhould be perſevering
To ſeke honour without feintiſe or ſlouth,
Fro wele to bettir in all manir thing,
In ſign of which with levis ay laſting
They be rewardid aftir ther degre,
Whoſe luſty grene may not appairid be,
But ay keping ther beauty freſh and grene,
For ther n'is no ſtorme that may them deface,
Ne hail nor ſnowe, ne wind nor froſtis kene,
Wherfore they have this propirty and grace;
And for the Flour within a litil ſpace
Wollin be loſt, ſo ſimple of nature
They be that they no grevaunce may endure:
And every ſtorme woll blowe them ſone away,
Ne they laſtè not but for a ſeſon,
That is the cauſe [the very trouth to ſay]
That they may not by no way of reſon
Be put to no ſuch occupacion.
Madame, quod I, with all mine whole ſerviſe
I thank you now in my moſt humble wiſe;
For now I am aſcertain'd thoroughly
Of every thing I deſirid to knowe.
I am right glad that I have ſaid, ſothly,
Ought to your pleſure, (if ye will me trow.)
Quod ſhe ayen. But to whom do ye owe
Your ſervice, and which wollin ye honour
[Pray tell me] this year, the Leſe or the Flour?
Madam, quod I, although I leſt worthy,
Unto the Leſe I ow mine obſervaunce.
That is, quod ſhe, right well done certainly,
And I pray God to honour you advaunce,
And kepe you fro the wickid remembraunce
Of Malèbouch and all his cruiltie,
And all that gode and well-condition'd be;
For here I may no lengir now abide,
But I muſt follow the grete company
That ye may ſe yondir before you ride;
And forthwith as I couth moſt humily
I toke my leve of her, and ſhe gan hie
Aftir them as faſt as evir ſhe might,
And I drow homeward, for it was nigh night,
And put all that I had ſene in writing,
Undir ſupport of them that luſt it rede.
O little boke! thou art ſo unconning,
How darſt thou put thy ſelf in prees for drede?
It is wondir that thou wexiſt not rede,
Sith that thou woſt full lite who ſhall behold
Thy rude langage full boyſtouſly unfold.

THE COURT OF LOVE.*

With timerous herte and trembling hand of drede,
Of cunning nakid, bare of eloquence,
Unto the flour of poft in womanhede
I write, as he that none intelligence
Of metris hath ne flouris of fentence,
Saufe that me lift my writing to convey
In that I can to plefe her high nobley.

The blofomes freth of Tulius gardein fote
Prefent thei not, my mattir for to borne,
Poemes of Virgile takin here no rote,
Ne craft of Galfride may not here fojourne;
Why n'am I cunning? 'o well maie I morne
For lacke of fcience, that I can nat write
Unto the princes of my lyfe aright!

No termes are digne unto her excellence,
So is fhe fpronge of noble ftripe and high;
A world of honour and of reverence
There is in her, this will I teftifie:
Caliope, thou fiftir wife and fly,
And thou Minerva! guide me with thy grace,
That langage rude my mattir not deface.

Thy fugir dropis fwete of Helicon
Diftil in me, thou gentle Mufe! I praye,
And the Melpomene I cal anone
Of ignoraunce the miſte to chace awaye,
And geve me grace fo for to write and faie
That fhe my lady of her worthineffe
Accept in gre this litil fhort tretefſe,

That is entitled thus, *The Courte of Love;*
And ye that ben metriciens me excufe,
I you befeche, for Venus fake above,
For what I mene in this ye nede not mufe;
And if fo be my lady it refufe
For lake of ornate fpeche, I wolde be wo
That I prefume to her to writin fo.

But my entente and all my bufy cure
Is for to write this tretefſe as I can,
Unto my lady ftable, true, and fure,
Faithful and kind, fith firſte that fhe began
Me to accept in fervice as her man;
To her be al the plefure of this boke,
That when her like fhe may it rede and loke.

When I was yong, at xviii yere of age,
Lufty and light, defirous of plefaunce,
Approching on full fade and ripe corage,
Love artid me to do my obfervaunce
To his eftate, and done him obeifaunce,
Commaundinge me *The Court of Love* to fe,
A lite befide the Mounte of Cithere;

There Citherea goddeffe was and quene,
Honourid highly for her majeſte,
And eke her fonne, the mighty god I wene,
Cupid the blind, that for his dignite
A M. lovirs worfhipp on ther kne;
There was I bid in paine of deth to pere
By Mercury the wingid meffingere:

So than I went by ftrange and ferre countrees,
Enquiringe aye what coaſte had to it drewe
The Court of Love, and thidirward as bees
At laſt I fe the peple gan purfue;
Anon me though; fome wight was ther that knew
Where that the *Court* was holdin ferre or nie.
And aftir than ful faſte I ganne me hie.

Anon as I them owirtoke I faid,
Heile, frendis! whethir purpofe ye to wend?
For foth, (quod one) that anfwered lyche a maid,
To *Love's Courte* now go we, gentil frend!
Where is that place, (quod I) my felowe hend?
At Citheron, Sir, faide he, without doute,
The kinge of Love, and al his noble route,

Dwelling within a caſtil rially.
So than apace I journid forth amonge;
And as he faide fo fond I there truly,
For I bchelde the touris high and ſtronge,

* This book is an imitation of The Romaunt of the Rofe, fhewing that all are fubject to love, what impedi ments foever to the contrary, containing alfo thofe 20 ſtatutes that are to be obſerved in The Court of Love. *Urry.*

And high pinaclis large of hight and longe,
With plate of gold beſpred on every ſide,
And precious ſtones, the ſtone werke for to hide.
No ſaphire of Inde, no rubie riche of price,
There lackid then, nor emeraude ſo grene,
Balis Turkis, ne thing to my deviſe
That may the caſtil makin for to ſhene,
All was as bright as ſterres in wintir bene,
And Phœbus ſhone to make his pece ageine
For treſpas done to high eſtatis tweine:
Venus and Mars, the god and goddeſſe clere,
When he them founde in armis cheinid faſte,
Venus was than ful ſad of herte and chere,
But Phœbus bemis, ſtreight as is the maſte,
Upon the caſtil ginnith he to caſt
To pleſe the lady, princes of that place,
In ſigne he lokith aftir Lov'is grace:
For ther n'is god in heven or hel iwys
But he hath ben right ſoget unto Love,
Jove, Pluto, or what ſo ever he is,
Ne creâture in erth or yet above,
Of this the revers may no wight approve;
But furthirmore the caſtill to deſcrie
Yet ſawe I nevir none ſo large and hie,
For unto heven it ſtretchith I ſuppoſe,
Within and out depeintid wondirly,
With many' a thouſand daiſy rede as roſe,
And white alſo, this ſawe I verily,
But what tho deiſis might do ſignifie
Can I not tel, ſauſe that the quen'is floure
Alceſte it was, that kept ther her ſojoure
Which undir Venus lady was and quene,
And Admete kyng and ſoverain of that place,
To whom obeied the ladies gode xix,
With many' a thouſand othir bright of face,
And young men fele came forth with luſti pace,
And agid eke, ther homage to diſpoſe,
But what they were I could not well diſcloſe.
Yet nere and nere forth in I gan me dreſſe
Into an halle of noble apparaile,
With arras ſpred and cloth of gold I geſſe,
And othir ſilke of eſyir availe;
Undir the cloth of ther eſtate, ſauns faile,
The king and quene there ſat, as I beheld;
It paſſid joye of Heliſe the feld.
There ſaintis have ther cominge and reſorte
To ſeen the kinge ſo rially beſene
In purple clad, and eke the quene in ſorte,
And on ther heddis ſawe I crounis tweine
With ſtonis fret, ſo that it was no paine
Withoutin mete and drinke to ſtand and ſe
The king'is honor and the rialte.
And for to trete of ſtatis with the king,
That ben of counſell chefe, and with the quene;
The king had Daungir nere to him ſtanding,
The quene of Love Diſdain, and that was ſene,
For by the faith I ſhal to God I wene
Was nevir ſtraungir none in her degre
Than was the quene in caſtinge of her eye.
And as I ſtode perceving her aparte,
And eke the bemis ſhininge of her eyen,
Me thought they werein ſhapin lyche a darte,
Sharpe and perſinge, ſmale and ſtreight as a line,
And al her here it ſhone as golde ſo fine,
Diſſhivil, criſpe, doune hanging at her backe
A yard in length, and ſouthely than I ſpake:
O bright *Regina!* who made the ſo faire?
Who made thy colour vermelet and white?
Wher wonneth the god, how far above the eyre?
Grete was his craſte, and grete was his delite;
Now marvil I nothing that ye do hight
The quene of Love, and occupie the place
Of Cithare: now, ſwete lady! thy grace.
In mewit ſpake I, ſo that nought aſterte
By no condicion word that might be hard,
But in my inward thought I gan adverte,
And oft I ſaid My wit is dul and hard,
For with her beautie thus God wot I ferde
As doeth the man yravifhid with ſight,
When I beheld her criſtal eyen ſo bright,
No reſpecte havyng what was beſte to done,
Till right anone beholding here and there
I ſpied a frend of myne, and that ful ſone,
A gentil woman, was the chambirere
Unto the quene, that hote as ye ſhall here,
Philobone, that lovid al her life;
Whan ſhe me ſey ſhe led me forth as blife,
And me demaundid how and in what wiſe
I thithir come, and what my erand was?
To ſene the Courte (quod I) and al the guiſe,
And eke to ſue for pardon and for grace,
And mercy aſke for al my grete treſpaſſe;
That I none erſte come to The Court of Love
Foryeve me this, ye goddis al above.
That is well ſaid (quod Philobone') in dede;
But were ye not aſſomoned to appere
By Mercurius, for that is al my drede?
Yes, gentill feire! (quod I) now am I here.
Ye, yet what tho though that be true, my dere?
Of your fre wil ye ſhuld have come unſente,
For ye did not I deme ye will be ſhente:
For ye that reigne in youth and luſtines,
Pampired with eſe, and jalous in your age,
Your dutie is, as far as I can geſſe,
To *Lov'is Courte* to dreſſin your viage
Aſſone as Nature makith you ſo ſage
That ye may know a woman from a ſwan.
Or whan your fote is grewin halfe a ſpan.
But ſithe that ye by wilful negligence
This xviii yere hath kept your ſelfe at large
The gretir is your treſpas and offence,
And in your neck you mote bere all the charge;
For bettir were ye ben withoutin barge
Amidde the ſe in tempeſt and in rayne
Then bidin here receving wo and pain
That ordeined is for ſoche as them abſente
Fro *Lov'is Courte* by yeris long and fele;
I ley my life ye ſhal ful ſone repente,
For Love wil reive youre coloure, luſt, and hele,
Eke ye muſt baite on many' an hevy mele:
No force iwis, I ſtired you longe agon
To drawe to Courte, quod litil Philobon;
Ye ſhal wel ſe how rough and angry face
The king of Love will ſhewe when ye him ſe;
By myn adviſe knele down and aſke him grace,
Eſchewing peril and adverſite,

For wel I wot it wolle none othir be:
Comforte is none ne council to your eſe,
Why wil ye then the king of Love diſpleſe?
O mercie, God! (quod iche) I me repent,
Caitiſe and wretche, in hert, in wil, and thought,
And aftir this ſhal be mine whole entent
To ſerve and pleſe, how dere that love be bought;
Yet ſith I have mine owne penaunce iſought
With humble ſpirite ſhal I it receve,
Though that the king of Love my life bereve;
And though that fervent Lov'is qualite
In me did nevir worche truly, yet I
With al obeiſaunce and humilite,
And benigne herte, ſhal ſerve him til I die;
And he that lord of might is grete and hie
Right as him liſt me chaſtice and correcte,
And puniſhe me, with treſpace thus enfecte.
Theſe wordis ſaid, ſhe caught me by the lap,
And led me furth in til a temple round,
Bothe large and wide, and as my bleſſid hap
And gode avinture was right ſone I founde
A tabernacle reiſid from the grou ide
Where Venus ſat and Cupid by her ſide,
Yet half for drede I can my viſage hide;
And eft againe I lokid and behelde,
Seing ful ſundry peple in the place
And miſtir folke, and ſome that might not welde
Ther limmis wele me thought a woundir caſe,
The temple ſhone with windowes al of glaſſe
Bright as the day, with manie' a faire ymage,
And there I ſe the freſhe Quene of Carthage,
Dido, that brent her beaute for the love
Of fals Æneas, and the weimenting
Of her Anelida, true as turtil dove
To Arcite fals; and there was in peinting
Of many' a prince and many' a doughty king
Whoſe martirdom was ſhewed about the walles,
And how that fele for love had ſuffrid falles.
But ſore I was abaſhid and aſtonied
Of al tho folke that there were in that tide,
And than I aſkid where they haddin woned?
In divers courtis, (quod ſhe) here beſide:
In ſondrie clothing mantilwiſe full wide
They were arraied, and did ther ſacrifice
Unto the god and goddeſſe in ther guiſe.
Lo, yondir folke (quod ſhe) that knele in blewe,
They were the colour ay and evir ſhal,
In ſigne they were and evir wil be true,
Withoutin chaunge, and ſouthely yondir all
That ben in blak, with mourning crie and call
Unto the goddes, for ther lovis bene
Some ſerre, ſom dede, ſom al to ſherpe and kene.
Yea, than, (quod I) what done theſe preſtis here,
Nonnis, and hermites, freris, and all tho
That ſit in white, in ruſſet, and in grene?
Forſothe (quod ſhe) they wailin of ther wo.
O mercie, Lord! may they ſo come and go
Frely to Court, and have ſoche libertie?
Yea, men of eche condicion and degre.
And women eke, for truly there is none
Exception made, ne nevir was ne may;
This Courte is ope and fre for everichone;
The king of Love he wil not ſay them nay;
He takith al in pore or riche array
That mekely ſewe unto his excellence
With al ther herte and al ther reverence.
And walking thus aboute with Philobone
I ſe where come a meſſengere in hie [anone
Streight from the king, whiche let commaunde
Throughout the Courte to make an ho and crie,
All new come folke abide; and wote ye why?
The king'is luſt is for to ſeen you ſone:
Come nere; let ſe; his wil mote nede be done.
Than gan I me preſent toſore the king
Trembling for fere, with viſage pale of hewe,
And many' a lovir with me was kneling,
Abaſhed ſore, til unto the time they knewe
The ſentence yeve of his entent full trew;
And at the laſt the king hath me behold
With ſterne viſage, and ſeid, What doth this olde,
Thus ferre yſtope in yeris, com ſo late
Unto the Courte? For ſothe, my liege, (quod I)
An hundrid tyme I have ben at the gate
Afore this tyme, yet coude I ner eſpie
Of myne acqueintaunce eny in mine eye,
And *Shamefaſtnes* away me ganne to chace,
But now I me ſubmitte unto your grace.
Wel, al is pardoned, with condicion
That thou be trew from hensforth to thy might,
And fervin Love in thine entencion;
Swere this, and than as ferre as it is right
Thou ſhalte have grace here in my quen'is ſight.
Yes, by the faith I owe your crown I ſwere,
Though Deth therfore me thirlith with his ſpere.
And whan the kinge had ſene us everychone
He let commaunde an officir in hie
To take our faith, and ſhew us one by one
The ſtatutes of the Courte full befily:
Anon the boke was leide before ther eye,
To rede and ſe what thing we muſt obſerve
In *Lov'is Courte* till that we dye and ſterve.

And for that I was lettrid there I red
The ſtatutes whole of *Lov'is Courte* and hall.
The firſte ſtatute that on the boke was ſpred
Was to be true in thought and dedis al
Unto the king of Love, the lorde ryall,
And to the quene as faithful and as kinde
As I coude thinke with herte, and will, and minde.
The ſeconde ſtatute ſecretly to kepe
Council of Love, not blowing every where
Al that I knowe, and let it ſinke and ſlete;
It may not ſowne in every wight'is ere,
Exiling ſlaundir ay for dred and fere,
And to my lady whiche I love and ſerve
Be true and kinde, her grace for to deſerve.
The thirde ſtatute was clerely writ alſo,
Withoutin chaunge to live and die the ſame,
None othir love to take for wele ne wo,
For blinde delite, for erneſt nor for game,
Without repent, for laughing or for grame,
To bidin ſtil in ful perſeveraunce;
Al this was whole the king'is ordinaunce.
The fourth ſtatute to purchace er to here
And ſtirin folke to love, and betin fire
On Venus auter here aboute and there,

And preche to them of Love and hote desire,
And tel how Love wil quitin wel ther hire;
This must be kept; and loth me to displese
If Love be wroth passe, for therby is ese.

The V. statute not to be daungirous

If that a thought would reve me of my slepe,
Nor of a sight to be ovir squemous,
And so verely this statute was to kepe,
To turne and wallowe in my bed and wepe
When that my lady of her cruiltie
Would from her herte exilin al pite.

The VI. statute it was for me to use
Alone to wandir voide of company,
And on my lad'is beautie for to muse,
And to thinkin no force to live or die,
And eft again to thinke the remedy
How to her grace I might anon attain,
And tel my wo unto my sovèraine.

The VII. statute was to be pacient
Whethir my lady joyful were or wroth,
For wordis glad or hevy diligent,
Whedir that she me heldin lese or loth,
And hereupon I put was to mine othe
Her for to serve and lowely to obey,
And shewe my chere ye xx sith aday.

The VIII. statute, to my rememberaunce,
Was for to speke and pray my lady dere
With hourely labour and gret entendaunce
Me for to love with al her herte entere,
And me desire and make me joyful chere,
Right as she is surmouning every faire,
Of beautie wel, and gentil, debonaire.

The IX. statute, with lettris writ of golde,
This was the sentence, how that I and al
Shulde evir dred to be to ovirbolde
Her to displese, and truly so I shal,
But ben content for al thing that may fal,
And mekely take her chastisement and yerde,
And to offende her evir ben aferde.

The X. statute was egally to' discerne
Betwene the lady' and thine abilite,
And thinke thy selfe arte nevir like to yerne
By right her mercy nor of equite,
But of her grace and womanly pite,
For though thy selfe be noble in thy strene
A thousande folde more nobil is thy quene.

Thy liv'is lady and thy sovèraine,
That hath thin herte all whole in govirnaunce,
Thou maiest no wise it takin to disdaine
To put the humble at her ordinaunce,
And give her fre the reine of her plesaunce,
For *Libertie is thing that women loke*,
And truely els the mattir is acroke.

The XI. statute thy signis for to knowe
With eye and fingir, and with smilis soste,
And lowe to couche, and alwaie for to showe
For drede of spyis for to winkin oste,
But secretly to bryng a sigh alofte,
And eke beware of ovir moche reforte,
For that para'venture spillith all thy sport.

The XII. statute remembir to observe,
For all the paine thou hast for love and wo
All is to lite her mercie to deserve;
Thou musten then thinke wher er thou ride or go,
And mortall woundis suffre thou also,
All for her sake, and thinke it well besette
Upon thy love, for it maie not be bette.

The XIII. statute whilome is to thinke
What thing maie best thy ladie like and plese,
And in thine hert'is botome let it sinke;
Some thing devise, and take for it thine ese,
And sende it her, that maie her herte appese,
Some herte or ryng, or lettir or devise,
Or precious stone; but spare not for no price.

The XIV. statute eke thou shalt assaie
Firmely to kepe the moste parte of thy life;
Wishe that thy ladie in thine armis laie,
And nightly dreme thou hast thy nighte's herte's
Swetly in armis, strainyng her as blise, [wise
And when thou seest it is but fantasie
Se that thou sing not ovir merily;

For Too moche joye hath ofte a wofull ende;

It longith eke, this statute for to holde,
To deme thy ladie evirmore thy frende,
And thinke thy self in no wise a cocolde;
In every thyng she doeth but as she should:
Construe the best, beleve no talis newe,
For *Many' a lye is telde that semeth full true;*

But thinke that she, so bountious and faire,
Coud not be false; imagine this algate;
And think that tonges wickid would her appaire,
Slanderyng her name and worshipfull estate,
And lovirs true to settin at debate;
And though thou seest a faute right at thine eye
Excuse it blive, and glose it pretilie.

The XV. statute use to swere and stare,
And counterfeite a lesyng hardily
To save thy ladie's honour every whare,
And put thy self to sightin boldily;
Saie she is gode, vertuous, and ghostly,
Clere of entent, and herte, and thought, and will;
And argue not for reson ne for skill

Againe thy ladie's plesure ne entent,
For Love will not be counterpleted in dede;
Saie as she saieth, then shalt thou not be shent,
The crowe is white. Ye, truly so I rede.
And aye what thing that she the will forbede
Eschue al that, and give her soverainte;
Her appetite folowe in all degre.

The XVI. statute kepe it if thou maie,
Seven sith at night, thy ladie for to plese,
And seven at midnight, se'ven at morow daie,
And drinke a caudill erely for thine ese:
Doe this, and kepe thine hedde from all disese,
And winne the garlande here of lovirs all
That evir came in Court or evir shall.

Full fewe think I this statute hold and kepe,
But truely this my reson giveth me sele
That some lovirs should rather fall aslepe
Then take on hand to plese so oft and wele:
There laie none othe to this statute adele,
But kepe who might as gave him his corage:
Now get this garlande lustie folke of age,

Now win who maie ye lustie folke of youth,
This garlande fresh, of flouris red and white,
Purple and blewe, and colours fell uncouth,

And I ſhall croune him kyng of all delite.
In all the Courte there was not to my ſight
A lovir true that he ne was adrede
When he expreſſe hath herd the ſtatute rede.
The XVII. ſtatute, when age approcheth on,
And luſt is laied, and all the fire is queint,
As freſhly then thou ſhalt begin to fonne
And dote in love, and all her image paint
In thy remembraunce till thou gin to faint,
As in the firſt ſeſon thyne herte began,
And her deſire, though thou ne maie ne can
Performe thy livyng actuell and luſt.
Regiſtir this in thyne rememberaunce
Eke, when thou maiſt not kepe thy thing from ruſt
Yet ſpeke and talke of pleſaunt daliaunce,
For that ſhall make thyne hert rejoyce and daunce;
And when thou maieſt no more the game aſſaie
The ſtatute bidde the praie for them that maie.
The XVIII. ſtatute wholy to commende
To pleſe thy ladie is, that thou eſchewe
With ſluttiſhneſſe thy ſelf for to offende;
Be joilife, freſh, and fete with thingis newe,
Courtlie with manir, this is all thy due,
Gentill of porte, and lovyng clenlineſſe;
This is the thing that likith thy maiſtreſſe;
And not to wandir liche a dullid aſſe,
Raggid and torne, diſguiſid in araie,
Ribaude in ſpeche, or out of meſure paſſe;
Thy bounde excedyng; thinke on this alwaie;
For *Women ben of tendir hertis aye,*
And lightly ſet ther plefure in a place,
When thei miſthinke they lightly let it paſſe.
The XIX. ſtatute mete and drinke forgete,
Eche othir daie ſe that thou faſt for love,
For in the Courte thei live withoutin mete,
Save ſoche as cometh from Venus al above;
Thei take none hede in pain of grete reprove
Of mete and drinke, for that is all in vaine,
Onely thei live by ſight of ther ſoveraine.
The XX. ſtatute, laſt of everichone,
Enrolle it in thyne hert'is privite,
To wring and waile, to turne, and ſigh, and grone,
When that thy ladie abſent is from the,
And eke renewe the wordis all that ſhe
Betwene you twain had ſaid, and all the chere
That the hath made thy liv'is lady dere.
And ſe thyne herte in quiete ne in reſt
Sojourne to tyme thou ſeen thy ladie eſte,
But where ſhe won, by ſouth, or eſt, or weſt,
With all thy force now ſe it be not leſte;
Be diligent till tyme thy life be reſte
In that thou maieſt thy ladie for to ſe;
This ſtatute was of old antiquite.
An officir of high authorite,
Yclepid Rigour, made us ſwere anone;
He n'as corrupt with parcialite,
Favour, prayir, ne gold that clerely ſhone.
Ye ſhall (quod he) now ſwerin her echone,
Both young and old, to kepe in that thei maie
The ſtatutes truely aftir this daie.'
O God! thought I, hard is to make this othe,
But to my powir ſhall I them obſerve:
In all this worlde n'as mattis halfe ſo lothe
To ſwere for all, for though my body ſterve
I have no might them wholy to obſerve.
But herkin now the cace how it befell;
Aftir my othe was made, the trouthe to tell,
I tournid levis, lokyng on this boke,
Where othir ſtatutes were of women ſhene,
And right forthwith Rigour on me gan loke
Full angirly, and ſaied unto the quene
I traitour was, and chargid me let ben;
There maie no man (quod he) the ſtatute knowe
That long to woman, hie degre ne lowe.
In ſecrete wiſe thei kepin ben full cloſe,
Thei ſoune echone to liberte, my frende;
Pleſaunt thei be, and to ther own purpoſe;
There wote no wight of them but God and ſende,
Ne naught ſhall wit unto the world'is ende;
The quene hath yeve me charge, in pain to die,
Nevir to rede ne ſeen them with myne eye:
For men ſhall not ſo nere of counſaill ben
With womanhode, ne knowin of ther guiſe,
Ne what thei think, ne of ther wit th' engine;
I me report to Salomon the wiſe,
And migh tie Sampſon which begilid thriſe
With Dalia was, he wot that in a throwe
There maie no man ſtatute of women knowe;
For it pera'venture maie right ſo befall
That thei be bounde by Nature to diſceve,
And ſpinne and wepe, and ſugre ſtrew on gal,
The herte of man to raviſhe and to reve,
And what ther tonge as ſharpe as ſwerde or gleve;
It maie betide this is ther ordinaunce,
So muſt thei lowlie doen ther obſervaunce,
And kepe the ſtatute yevin them of Kinde,
Of ſoche as Love hath yeve 'hem in ther life;
Men maie not wete why turnith every wind,
Nor waxin wiſe, nor ben inquiſitiſe
To knowe ſecrete of maide, widowe, or wife,
For thei ther ſtatutes have to them reſerved,
And nevir man to knowe them hath deſerved.
Now dreſſe you forth, the god of Love you guide,
Quod Rigour then, and ſeke the temple bright
Of Citherea, goddes here beſide;
Beſeche her by the influence and might
Of all her vertue you to teche aright
How for to ſerve your ladies and to pleſe,
Ye that ben ſped, and ſet your herte in eſe;
And ye that ben unpurveied, pray her eke
Comforte you ſone with grace and deſtinie,
That ye may ſet your hert there ye maie like,
In ſoche a place that it to Love maie be
Honour, and worſhip, and felicitie,
To you for aie. Now goeth by one affent.
Graunt mercie, Sir (quod we) and forth we went
Devoutly, ſoft and eſie pace, to ſe
Venus the goddes image all of golde,
And there we found a thouſand on ther kne,
Some freſhe and faire, ſome dedly to beholde,
In ſondrie mantils new, and ſome wer olde,
Some paintid were with flamis red as fire,
Outward, to ſhewe ther inward hote deſire.
With dolefull chere, full fele in ther complaint,
Cried, "Ladie Venus! rewe upon our ſore;
"Receive our billes, with teris all bedreint,

" We maie not wepe, there is no more in ſtore,
" But wo and pain us frettith more and more;
" Thou bliſſefull planet! lovirs ſterre ſo ſhene,
" Have routh on us that ſigh, and careful ben;
" And puniſhe, ladie, grevouſly, we praie,
" The falſe untrue with counterfeite pleſaunce
" That made ther othe be true to live or deie;
" With chere aſſurid and with countinaunce,
" And falſly now thei fotin Lov'is daunce
" Barain of routh, untrue of that thei ſaied,
" Now that ther luſt and pleſure is alaid.
" Yet eſte againe a thouſande milion,
" Rejoycing love, ledyng ther life in bliſſe,
" Thei ſaid, Venus, redreſſe of all diviſion,
" Goddes eternell, thy name heryed is,
" By lovirs bonde is knit all thing iwis,
" Beſt unto beſt, the yerth to watir wanne,
" Birde unto birde, and woman unto man.
" This is the life of joye that we ben in,
" Reſemblyng life of hevenly paradiſe;
" Love is elixir aie of vice and ſinne,
" Love makith hert'is luſtie to deviſe;
" Honour and grace have thei in every wiſe
" That ben to Lov'is lawe obedient;
" Love makith folke benigne and diligent,
" Aie ſteryng them to dredin vice and ſhame;
" In ther degre it maketh them honourable,
" And ſwete it is of Love to bere the name,
" So that his love be faithfull, true, and ſtable;
" Love prunith hym to ſemin amiable,
" Love hath no faute there it is exerciſed,
" But ſole with them that have all love diſpiſed.
" Honour to the, celeſtiall and clere
" Goddes of Love, and to thy celſitude,
" That yeveſt us light ſo ferre doune from thy ſpere,
" Perſying our hertis with thy pulchritude;
" Compariſon none of ſimilitude
" Maie to thy grace be made in no degre,
" That haſt us ſet with Love in unitie.
" Grete cauſe have we to praiſe thy name and the,
" For thorough the we live in joye and bliſſe;
" Bleſſid be thou, moſte ſoveraine to ſe!
" Thy holy Courte of gladneſſe maie not miſſe;
" A thouſand ſith we may rejoyce in this,
" That we ben thine with herte and all yfere,
" Enflamid with thy grace and hevenly fere."

Muſyng of tho that ſpakin in this wiſe
I me bethought in my remembèraunce
Myne oriſon right godely to deviſe,
And pleſauntly with hert'is obeiſaunce
Beſeche the goddes voidin my grevaunce,
For I loved eke, ſauſe that I wiſt no where,
Yet doun I ſet, and ſaied as ye ſhall here:

Fairiſt of all that evir were or be,
Licour and light to penſife creäture,
Myne whole affiaunce and my ladie fre,
My goddes bright, my fortune, and my ure!
I yeve and yelde my herte to the full ſure,
Humbly beſechyng, ladie, of thy grace
Me to beſtow in ſome bleſſid place,
And here I vowe me faithfull, true, and kind,
Without offence of mutabilitie,
Humbly to ſerve while I have wit and mind,
Myne whole affiaunce and my ladie fre,
In thilke place there ye me ſigne to be;
And ſith this thing of newe is yeve me, aie
To love and ſerve nedely muſt I obeie.

Be merciable with thy ſire of grace,
And fixe mine herte there beautie is and routh,
For hote I love; determine in no place,
Sauſe only this, by God and by my trouth
Troublid I was with ſlombir, ſlepe, and ſlouth,
This othir night, and in a viſioun
I ſe a woman romin up and doune

Of mene ſtature, and ſemely to beholde,
Luſtie and freſh, demure of countinaunce,
Yong and well ſhap, with here that ſhone as golde,
With eyen as criſtall, fercid with pleſaunce,
And ſhe gan ſtirre mine herte a lite to daunce,
But ſodainlie ſhe vaniſhe gan right there;
Thus I maie ſaie I love and wote not where.

For what ſhe is ne her dwellyng I n'ot,
And yet I fele that love diſtreinith me,
Might iche her knowe, that would I faine God wot,
Serve and obeye with all benignitie,
And if that othir be my deſtinie,
So that no wiſe I ſhall her nevir ſe,
Then graunt me her that beſt maie likin me,

With glad rejoyce to live in perfite hele,
Devoide of wrathe, repent, or variaunce,
And able me to doe that maie be wele
Unto my ladie with herte's hie pleſaunce;
And, mightie goddes! through thy purviaunce
My wit, my thought, my luſt, and love, ſo guide
That to thine honour I maie me provide

To ſet mine hert in place there I maie like,
And gladly ſerve with all affeccion;
Grete is the pain which at mine hert doth ſticke
Till I be ſped by thyne eleccion;
Helpe, ladie goddes! that poſſeſſion
I might of her have that in all my life
I clepin ſhal my quene and hert'is wife;

And in the *Courte of Love* to dwell for aie
My will is, and doin the ſacrifice,
Daily with Diane eke to fight and fraie,
And holdin werre, as might will me ſuffice;
That goddes chaſte I kepin in no wiſe
To ſerve; a figge for all her chaſtite!
Her lawe is for religiouſite.

And thus gan finiſh prayir, laude, and preice,
Whiche that I yove to Venus on my kne,
And in myne herte to pondir and to peice
I gan anone her image freſhe beautie;
Heile to that figure ſwete, and heile to the,
Cupide! (quod I) and roſe and yede my weie;
And in the temple as I yede I ſeie

A ſhrine ſurmountyng all in ſtonis riche,
Of whiche the force was pleſaunce to mine eye,
With diamonde or ſaphire nevir liche
I have none ſeen, ne wrought ſo wondirlie;
So when I met with Philobone in hie
I gan demaunde whoſe is this ſepulture?
Forſothe, (quod ſhe) a tendir creäture

Is ſhrinid there, and Pitie is her name;
She ſawe an egle wreke hym on a flie,
And plucke his wing, and eke him, in his game,

And tendir herte of that hath made her die;
Eke ſhe would wepe and mourne right pitouſly
To ſeen a lovir ſuffre grete diſtreſſe;
In all the Courte n'is none, as I dogeſſe
That coud a lovir half ſo well availe,
Ne of his wo the torment or the rage
Aſkin, for he was ſure withoutin faile
That of his grief ſhe coud the hete aſwage;
In ſtede of Pitie ſpedith hote Corage
The mattirs all of Courte; now ſhe is dedde
I me reporte in this to womanhedde; [pray
Forweile, and wepe, and crie, and ſpeke, and
Women would not have pitie on thy plaint,
Ne by that mene to eſe thine herte convaie,
But the recevin for ther owne talent,
And ſaie that Pitie cauſith them conſent
Of reuth to take thy ſervice and thy paine,
In that thou maieſt, to pleſe thy ſoveraine.
But this is counſaill, kepe it ſecretly,
(Quod ſhe;) I n'olde for all the worlde about
The quene of Love it wiſt, and witte ye why?
For if by me this mattir ſpringin out
In Courte no lengir ſhould I out of doubt
Dwellin, but ſhame in all my life endry:
Now kepe it cloſe (quod ſhe) this hardily.
Well, all is well: now ſhall ye ſeen, ſhe ſaied,
The fairiſt ladie undir ſonne that is:
Come on with me; demene you lich a maide
With ſhamefaſt drede, for ye ſhall ſpeke ywis
With her that is the mirrour, joie, and bliſſe,
But ſomwhat ſtraunge and ſad of her demene
She is: beware your countinaunce be ſene,
Not ovirlight, ne recheleſſe, ne to holde,
Ne malaperte, ne rennyng with your tong,
For ſhe will you obeiſin and beholde,
And you demaunde why ye wer hens ſo long
Out of this Courte, without reſort emong;
And Roſiall her name is hote aright,
Whoſe herte is yet yyevin to no wight.
And ye alſo ben, as I undirſtonde,
With Love but light avaunced by your worde;
Might ye by hap your fredom makin bond,
And fall in grace with her, and wele accorde,
Well might ye thanke the god of Love and lord,
For ſhe that ye ſawe in your dreme appere
To love ſoche one what are thei then the nere?
Yet wote ye what? as my rememberaunce
Me yevith nowe, ye ſaine where that ye ſaie
That ye with Love han nevir acquaintaunce
Save in your dreme right late this othir daie;
Why, yes parde, my life that durſt I laie
That ye were caught upon an heth when I
Sawe you complain and ſigh full pitouſly;
Within an herbir and gardein faire,
Where flowirs growe and herbis vertuous,
Of whiche the ſavour ſwete was and the eire,
There were your ſelf full hote and amorous;
Ywis ye ben to nice and daungirous;
I would ye now repent and love ſome newe.
Naie, by my trothe, I ſaied, I nevir knewe
The godely wight whoſe I ſhal be for aye,
Guide me the Lorde, that love hath made and me:
But forthe we went into a chambre gaie
There was Roſiall, womanly to ſe,
Whoſe ſtremis, ſotill perſyng of her eye,
Mine hert gan thrill for beatie in the ſtounde;
Alas (quod I) who hath me yeve this wounde!
And then I drede to ſpeke till at the laſte
I grete the ladie reverently and wele,
When that my ſigh was gone and ovirpaſſe,
And doune on knees full humbly gan I knele,
Beſechyng her my fervent wo to hele,
For there I toke full purpoſe in my mynde
Unto her grace my painfull herte to bynde.
For if I ſhall all fully her diſcrive
Her hed was rounde by compaſſe of Nature,
Her eere as gold, ſhe paſſid all on live,
And lillie forehed had this creature,
With liveliſhe browis, flawe of colour pure,
Betwene the which was mene diſſeveraunce,
From every browe to ſhewin a diſtaunce;
Her noſe directed ſtreght, and even as line,
With forme and ſhape thereto convenient,
In which the godis milkewhite path doth ſhine,
And eke her eyen ben bright and orient
As is the ſmaragde, unto my judgement,
Or yet theſe ſterris hevenly ſmall and bright,
Her viſage is of lovely rede and white;
Her mouthe is ſhort, and ſhitte in litil ſpace,
Flamyng ſomdele, not ovir redde I mene.
With pregnaunt lips, and thicke to kiſſe peresce,
For lippis thinne, not fat, but evir lene,
They ſerve of naught, they be not worth a bene,
For if the baſſe ben full there is delite;
Maximian truely thus doeth he write.
But to my purpoſe; I ſaie white as ſnowe
Ben all her tethe, and in ordir thei ſtonde
Of one ſtature, and eke her breth I trowe
Surmountith all odours that er I founde,
In ſweteneſſe, and her body, face, and honde,
Ben ſharply ſlendir ſo that from the hedde
Unto the fote all is but womanhedde.
I holde my pece of othir thingis hidde;
Here ſhal my ſoule and not my tong bewrie;
But how ſhe was arraied, if ye me bidde,
That ſhall I well diſcovir you and ſaie;
A bende of guld and ſilk full freſhe and gaie,
With her intreſſe ybroudirid full wele,
Right ſmothly kept, and ſhinyng every dele;
About her necke a flower of freſh deviſe,
With rubies ſet that luſtie were to ſene,
And ſhe in goune was light and ſommir wiſe,
Shapin full wele, the colour was of grene,
With aureat ſent aboute her ſidis clene,
With divers ſtonis precious and riche;
Thus was ſhe raied, yet ſawe I ner her liche:
For if that Jove had this ladie yſeine,
Tho the faire Caliſto ne Alcmena
Thei nevir haddin in his armis leine,
Ne he had lovid the faire Europa,
Ye, ne yet Danae ne Antiopa.
For all ther beautie ſtode in Roſiall;
She ſemid lich a thyng celeſtiall,
In bountie, favour, porte, and ſimilineſſe,
Pleſaunt of figure, mirrour of delite,
Gracious to ſeen, rote of all gentilneſſe,

With angell viſage, luſtie, redde, and white;
There was not lack, ſauſe Daungir had alite
This godely freſhe in rule and govirnaunce,
And ſomdele ſtraunge ſhe was for her pleſaunce.
And truly ſone I toke my leve and went
When ſhe had me enquirid what I was,
For more and more impreſſin gan the dent
Of Lov'is darte while I beheldе her face,
And eſtè againe I come to ſekin grace,
And up I put my bill with ſentance clere
That ſoloweth aftir; rede, and ye ſhall here:
O, ye freſhe lovelie! of beautie the rote,
That Nature hath formid ſo wele, and made
Princes and quene, and ye that maie do bote
Of all my langoure with your wordis glad,
Ye woundid me, ye made me wo beſtad;
Of grace redreſſe my mortall greſe, as ye
Of all my harme the very cauſir be.
Now am I caught, and unware ſodainly,
With perſaunt ſtremis of your eyin clere,
Subjecte to ben and ſervin you mekely,
And all your man, ywis, my ladie dere!
Abidyng grace, of whiche I you requere,
That mercileſſe ye cauſe me not to ſterve,
But gueridon me liche as I maie deſerve;
For by my trothe the dayis of my breth
I am and will be your in will and herte,
Pacient and meke for you to ſuffir deth
If it require; now rue upon my ſmerte
And this I ſwere, I nevir ſhall out ſterte
From Lov'is Courte for none adverſite,
So ye would rue on my diſtreſſe and me.
My deſtinie, my faſe, and heure, I bliſſe,
That have me ſet to ben obedient
Onely to you, the floure of all ywis;
I truſt to Venus nevir to repent,
For evir redy, glad, and diligent,
Ye ſhall me finde in ſervice to your grace
Till deth my life out of my body raſe.
Humble unto your excellence ſo digne
Enforcing aye my wittis and delite
To ſerve and pleſe with glad herte and benigne,
And ben as Troilus, Troie's worthie knight,
Or Antonie for Cleopatra bright,
And nevir you me thinkis to renay;
This ſhall I kepe unto myne endyng day.
Enprint my ſpeche in your memoriall
Sadly, my princes, ſalve of all my ſore
And thinke that for I would becomin thrall,
And ben your owne, as I have ſaied before,
Ye muſt of pitie cheriſhe more and more
Your man, and tendir aftir his deſerte,
And give hym corage for to ben experte:
For where that one hath ſet his herte on fire,
And findith neithir refute ne pleſaunce,
Ne worde of comforte, Deth will quite his hire;
Alas that there ne is none allegaunce
Of all ther wo! alas the grete grevaunce
To love unloved! but ye, my ladie dere!
In other wiſe male governe this matere.
Truly gramercie, frende! of your gode will,
And of your profir in your humble wiſe,
But for your ſervice take and hepe it ſtill;

And wher ye ſaie I ought you well to cheriſhe,
And of your greſe the remedie deviſe,
I knowe not why; I n'am acquaintid well
With you, ne wote not ſothly where ye dwell.
In art of love I write and ſongis make,
That maie be ſong in honour of the kyng
And quene of Love, and them I undirtake
He that is ſadde ſhall then full mery ſyng,
And dangirous not ben in every thyng:
Beſeche I you but ſeen my will and rede,
And let your anſwere put me out of drede.
What is your name? reherſe it here, I praie,
Of whens and where, of what condicion,
That ye ben of: let ſe; come of and ſaie;
Faine would I knowe your diſpoſicion:
Ye have put on your old entencion,
But whate ye mene to ſerve me I ne wote,
Sauſe that ye ſaie ye love me woundir hote.
My name, alas my herte! why makes thou ſtraunge?
Philogenet I cal'd am ferre and nere,
Of Cambrige clerke, that nevir thinke to chaunge
Fro you, that with your hevenly ſtremis clere
Raviſhe myne herte and ghoſt, and all in fere:
Since at the firſt I write my bill for grace
Me thinke I ſe ſome mercie in your face.
And what I mene, by God that al hath wrought,
My bille now makith final mencion,
That ye ben ladie in myne inward thought
Of all myne herte withoutin offencion,
That I beſte love, and have ſith I begon
To drawe to Courte; lo then what might I ſaie?
I yelde me here unto your high nobleye;
And if that I offende, or wilfully
By pompe of herte your precept diſobaie,
Or doen againe your wille unſkilfully,
Or grevin you for erneſt or for plaie,
Correcte ye me right ſharply then I praie,
As it is ſeen unto your womanhede,
And rewe on me, or els I n'am but dede.
Naie, God forbede to ſeffe you ſo with grace,
And for a word of fugrid eloquence
To have compaſſion in ſo lityl ſpace!
Then were it tyme that ſome of us wet hens;
Ye ſhall not finde in me ſoche inſolence:
Aye, what is this! mlie ye not ſuffre ſight?
How maie ye loke upon the candill light,
That clere is and hottir then is myne eye?
And yet ye ſaied the bemis perſe and frete,
How ſhall ye then the candill light endrie?
For well wotte ye that hath the ſharpir hete:
And there ye bidde me you correct and bete
If ye offende; naie, that maie not be doen;
There come but few that ſpedin here ſo ſone,
Withdrawe your eye, withdrawe from preſens
Hurte not your ſelf through foly with a loke; [eke;
I would be ſory ſo to make you ſicke;
A woman ſhould beware eke whom ſhe toke:
Ye beth a clerke, go ſerchin wel my boke
If any women ben ſo light to winne:
Naie'; abide a while tho ye were all my kinne;
So ſone ye maie not win myne bert in truth;
The guiſe of Court will ſeen your ſtedfaſtneſſe,
And as you doen to have upon you reuth;

Your owne deserte and lowly gentilneſſe
That will reward you joye for hevineſſe,
And tho ye waxin pale, and grene, and dede,
Ye muſte it uſe a while withoutin drede,
And it accept, and grutchin in no wiſe:
But wheras ye me haſtily deſire
To bene to love, me thinke ye be not wiſe;
Ceſe of your language, ceſe I you requere,
For he that hath this xx yere bene here
May nat optaine; than marvaile I that ye
Be now ſo bold of love to trete with me.
A, mercy, hert! my lady and my love,
My rightwiſe princeſſe and my lyv'is guide!
Nowe may I plein to Venus al above
That routhles ye me gave this wounde ſo wide:
What have I done? why may it not betide
That for my trouthe I may recevid be?
Alas than your daungir and cruiltie!
In woful houre I gote was, welawey!
In woful hour ſoſtirid and yſedde,
In woful hour yborne, that I ne may
My ſuplicacion ſwetely have yſpedde;
The froſty grave and cold muſte be my bedde
Withoute ye liſt your grace and mercy ſhewe,
Death with his axe ſo faſte on me doth hewe.
So grete diſeſe and in ſo litil while,
So litil joy that felte I nevir yet,
And at my wo Fortune ginnith to ſmyle,
That nevir erſt I felte ſo harde a ſitte;
Confoundid ben my ſpirites and my witte
Til that my lady take me to her cure
Whiche I love beſte of erthely creature.
But that I like that may I not come by,
Of that I plain that have I habondaunce;
Sorowe and thought they fit me wondir nye;
Me is withhold that might be my pleſaunce;
Yet turne again my worldly ſuffiſaunce,
O lady bright! and ſaufe your faithful true,
And or I die yet ones upon me rewe.
With that I fell in ſounde and dede as ſtone,
With coloure ſlaine and wanne as aſhe pale,
And by the hande ſhe caught me up anon;
Arife! (quod ſhe) what have ye dronkin dwale?
Why ſlepin ye? it is no nitirtale.
Now mercy, ſwete! (quod I) iwis affraied.
What thing (quod ſhe) hath made you ſo diſmaied?
Now wote I wel that ye a lovir be,
Your hew is witneſſe in this thing, ſhe ſaid;
Yf ye were ſecret ye might knowe (quod ſhe)
Curteiſe and kinde all this ſhuld be aleide;
And now, myne herte! al that I have miſſeid
I ſhal amend, and ſet your herte in eſe.
That worde it is (quod I) that doth me pleſe.
But this I charge, that ye the ſtentis kepe,
And breke them not for ſloth nor ignoraunce;
With that ſhe gan to ſmile and laughin depe.
Ywis (quod I) I will do your pleſaunce;
The xvi ſtatute doth me grete grevaunce,
But ye muſt that releffe or modifie.
I graunte, (quod ſhe) and ſo I wil truly.
And ſoftely than her coloure gan appeire
As roſe ſo red throughout her viſage al,
Wherfore me thinke that it 'is according here
That ſhe of right be clepid Roſial.
Thus have I wonne with wordis grete and ſmal
Some godely worde of her that I love beſt,
And truſt ſhe ſhall yet ſette mine herte in reſt.

Goth on, ſhe ſaid to Philobone, and take
This man with you, and lede him al aboute
Within the Courte, and ſhewe him for my ſake
What lovirs dwel within, and al the route
Of officirs, for he is oute of doute
A ſtranngir yet. Come on, (quod Philobone)
Philogenet, with me nowe muſt ye gon.
And ſtalking ſofte with eſy pace I ſawe
Aboute the king yſtondin environ
Attendaunce, Diligence, and ther felow
Forthirir Aſperaunce, and many one,
Dred to offende there ſtode, and not alone,
For there was eke the cruil adverſarye,
The lovirs fo, that cleped is Diſpleſure,
Whiche unto me ſpake angrily and ſelle,
And ſaid, My lady me diſſevin ſhall;
Troweſt thou (quod ſhe) that al that ſhe did tell
Is true? nay, nay, but undir hony gall
Thy birth and hers thei be nothing egal;
Caſte of thine herte for all her wordis white,
For gode faith ſhe lovith the but alite;
And eke remembre thine habilite
May not compare with her, this wel thou wot.
Ye, than come Hope, and ſaid, My frende, let be,
Beleve him not; Diſpaire he ginnith dote.
Alas, (quod I) here is both cold and hote!
The tone me biddith love, the todir nay,
Thus wote I not what me is beſt to ſay;
But wel wote I my lady grauntid me
Truly to be my wound'is remedy;
Her gentilneſſe may not infectid be
With doubleneſſe, thus truſt I til I die;
So caſt I voide Diſpairis company,
And takin Hope to council and to frende.
Yea, kepe that wel (quod Philabone) in minde.
And there beſide, within a bay windowe,
Stod one in grene ful large of bred and length,
His berd as black as ſethirs of the crow,
His name was Luſt, of woundir might and ſtrength,
And with Delite to argue there he thinkth,
For this was alway his opinion
That love was ſinne, and ſo he hath begonne.
To reſon faſte, and ledge auctorite.
Nay, (quod Delite) Love is a vertue clere
And from the ſoule his progreſſe holdith he;
Blinde appetite of Luſt doth oftin ſtere,
And that is ſinne, for reſon lackith there,
For thou doeſt think thy neighbour's wife to winne,
Yet thinke it wel that love may not be ſinne:
For God and ſeint they love right verily,
Voide of al ſynne and viſe, this know I wel;
Affeccion of fleſhe is ſinne truly,
But verray love is vertue, as I ſele,
For verray love may freile deſire ackele,
For love is love withoutin any ſinne.
Nowe ſtint, (quod Luſte) thou ſpeke ſt not worth a pinne.
And there I left them in ther arguing,
Roming ferthir into the caſtil wide,
And in a cornir Lier ſtode talking

Of lesings fast with Flatery there beside;
He said that women were attire of pride,
And men were founde of nature variaunte,
And coulde be false and shewin beau semblaunt.
Than Flatiry bespake, and said, I wis,
Se, so she goth on patins faire and fete,
It doth right well; what pretty man is this
That romith here? now truly drink ne mete
Nede I not have, mine herte for joye doth bete
Him to beholde, so is he godely freshe,
It semeth for love his herte is tendre' and nesshe.
This is the Courte of lusty folke and glad,
And wel becometh ther abite and arraye;
O! why be som so sory and so sadde,
Complaining thus in blak, and white, and gray?
Freris they ben and monkis in gode fay:
Alas for routh! gret dole it is to sene
To se them thus bewaile and sory bene.
Se how they crie and wring ther handis whit
For they so sone went to religion,
And eke the nonnes with vail and wimple plight
Ther thought that they ben in confusion:
Alas! they sain we fain perfeccion
In clothis wide and lacke our libertie,
But al the sinne mote on our frendis be:
For Venus wote we wold as faine as ye,
That bene attirid here and wel besene,
Desyrin man, and love in our degre
Ferme and faithful, right as ywold the quene:
Our frendis wicke, in tendir youth and grene,
Ayenst our will made us religious,
That is the cause we mourne and wailin thus.
Then saide the monke and freris in the tide,
Wel may we curse our abbis and our place,
Our statutes sharpe to sing in copis wide,
Chastely to kepe us oute of Lov'is grace,
And nevir to selé comforte ne solace,
Yet suffre we the hete of Lovis fire,
And aftir othir happily we desire.
O Fortune coursid! why nowe and wherfore
Hast thou, they said, berafte us libertie,
Sithe Nature yave us instrument in store,
And appetite to love and lovirs be?
Why mot we suffer soche adversite
Diane to serve and Venus to refuse?
Ful oftin sythe this matier doth us muse.
We serve and honour sore ayenste our will
Of Chastite the goddes and the quene;
Us lesir were with Venus bidin stil,
And have reward for Love, and soget bene
Unto these women courtely, freshe and shene.
Fortune! we curse thy whele of variaunce,
Ther we were wel thou revist our plesaunce.
Thus leve I them with voice of plaint and eare
In raging wo criyng ful pitously;
And as I yede ful nakid and ful bare
Some I beholde loking dispiteously,
On Povirte that dedly cast ther eye,
And Welaway they cried, and were not faine,
For they ne might ther glad desire attaine,
For lacke of richesse worldly and of gode
They banne, and curse, and wepe, and sain Alas!
That poverte' hath us hent that whilom stode
At hert'is ese, and fre, and in gode case,
But now we dare not shew our selfe in place,
Ne us embolde to dwel in company
There as our hert wold love right faithfully.
And yet againewarde shrikid every nonne,
The pange of love so strainith them to crie;
Nowe we the time (quod they) that we be boun!
This hateful ordre nise wil doen us die,
We sigh and sobbe, and bleding inwardly,
Freting our selfe with thought and hard complaint,
That nye for love we waxin wode and faint.
And as I stode beholding here and there
I was ware of a sorte ful languishing,
Savage and wilde of loking and of chere,
Ther manteilles and ther clothis ey tering,
And ofte they were of Nature complaining,
For they ther membirs lackid fote and hand,
With visage wry, and blinde I undirstand.
They lackid shap and beautie to preferre
Them self in love, and said that God and Kind
Hath forgid them to worshippin the sterre
Venus the bright, and leftin al behinde
His othir werkis clene and oute of minde,
For othir have ther full shappe and beautie,
And we (quod they) ben in deformite.
And nye to them there was a company
That have the Sustirs waried and missaide,
I mene the thre of fatall Destine,
That be our werdis; sodenly abraide
Oute gan they crie as they had ben affraied,
We curse (quod they) that evir hath Nature
Yformid us this wofull life to' endure.
And there he was contrite and gan repent,
Confessing whole the wounde that Cithere
Hath with the darte of hote desire him sent,
And howe that he to Love muste subject be,
Than held he al his skornis vanite,
And said hat lovirs lede a blisful life,
Yong men and olde, and widowe, maid, and wife,
Bereve me, goddesse, (quod he) of thy might
My skornis al and skoffis that I have,
No powir for to mockin any wight
That in thy service dwel, for I did rave,
This knowe I wel right now, so God me save,
And I shal be the chief post of thy faith,
And love uphold, the revers who so saith.
Dissemble stode not ferre from him in trouth,
With party mantil, party hode and hose,
And said he had upon his lady routh,
And thus he wound him in and gan to glose,
Of his entent full double I suppose,
And al the worlde he said he loved it wele,
But ay me thought he loved her nere adele.
Eke *Shamefastnesse* was there, as I toke hede,
That blushid rede, and darst nat ben aknowe
She lovir was, for therof had she drede;
She stode and hing her visage downe alowe,
But soche a sight it was to sene I trowe
As of these rosis rody on ther stalke,
Ther coud no wight her spy to speke or talke.
In Lov'is arte so gan she to abashe,
Ne durst not uttir al her privite,
Many a stripe and many' a grevouse lashe

She gave to them that woldin lovirs be,
And hindered fore the ſimple comi'naltie,
That in no wiſe durſt grace and mercie crave,
For were not ſhe they nede but aſke and have;
Where yf they now aprochin for to ſpeke,
Than *Shamefaſtneſſe* returnith them again,
They thinke if we our ſecret counſel breke
Our ladies wil have ſcorne on us certein,
And peravinture thinkin grete diſdain;
Thus *Shamefaſtneſſe* may bringin in Diſpeire;
When ſhe is dede the todir will be heire.
Come forth Avauntir, now I ring thy bel;
I ſpied him ſone to God I make a vowe;
He lokid black as fendis doth in hell.
The firſte (quod he) that evir did I wowe
Within a worde ſhe come, I wotte not how,
So that in armis was my lady fre,
And ſo hath ben a thouſande mo than ſhe
In England, Britain, Spain, and Picardie,
Artois, and Fraunce, and up in Hie Holande,
In Burgoine, Naples, and in Italye,
Navarre, and Grece, and up in Hethin lond;
Was nevir woman yet that wolde withſtond
To ben at commaundement whan I wolde;
I lackid neithir ſilver coigne ne gold:
And there I met with this eſtate and that,
And here I brochid her, and here, I trowe:
Lo! there goeth one of myn; and wotte ye what?
Yon freſhe attirid have I leide ful lowe;
And ſoche one yondir eke right wel I knowe;
I kepte the ſtatute whan we lay ifere,
And yet yon ſame hath made me right gode chere.
Thus hath Avauntir blowin every where
Al that he knoweth, and more a thouſande fold;
His aunciſtrie of kinne was to Lier,
For firſte he makith promiſe for to hold
His ladis council, and it not unfolde,
Wherfore the ſecrete when he doth unſhitte
Than lyith he that all the worlde maye witte.
For falſing ſo his promiſe and beheſte
I wondir fore he hath ſoche fantaſie;
He lackith witte I trowe or is a beſte,
That can no bette himſelfe with reſon gay;
By mine advice Love ſhall be contrarie
To his avail, and him eke diſhonoure,
So that in Courte he ſhall no more ſojoure.
Take hede (quod ſhe this litil Philobone)
Where Envie rockith in the cornir yondè,
And ſittith derke, and ye ſhal ſe anone
His lene bodie, his ſading face and honde;
Him ſelf he frettith, as I undirſtonde,
Witneſſe of Ovide Metamorphoſoſe;
The lovir's ſo he is, I will not gloſe:
For where a lovir thinkith him promote
Envie wil grutche, repining at his wele;
It ſwellith fore about his hertis rote,
That in no wiſe he canne not live in hele;
And if the faithful to his lady ſtele
Envie will noiſe and ringe it rounde aboute,
And ſey moch worſe than done is out of doute.
And Privie Thought, rejoyſing of him ſelfe,
Stode not ferre thens in abite mervilous;
Yon is, thought I, ſome ſpirite or ſome elfe,
His ſotil image is ſo curious;
How is (quod I) that he is ſhadid thus
With yondir cloth, I n'ot of what coloure?
And nere I went, and gan to lere and pore,
And fainid him a queſtion ful harde;
Whate is (quod I) the thing thou loviſt beſte,
Or what is bote unto thy painis harde?
Me thinke thou liviſt here in gret unreſt,
Thou wandriſt aye from ſouth to eſt and weſt,
And eſt to northe: as ferre as I canne ſe
There is no place in Court may holdin the.
Whom ſoloweſt thou? wher is thy hert ifet?
But my demaunde aſoile I the require.
Me thought (quod he) no creature may let
Me to ben here and where as I deſire,
For whare as Abſence hath done out the fire
My mery thought it kindeleth yet againe,
That bodily me thinke with my ſoveraine
I ſtand, and ſpeke, and laugh, and kiſſe, and halſe,
So that my thought comfortith me ful oft;
I think, God wote, though al the world be falſe
I wil be true; I thinke alſo howe ſofte
My lady is in ſpeche, and this on loft
Bringith mine herte with joie and gret gladneſſe,
This privey thought alaieth mine hevineſſe.
And whate I thinke or where to be no man
In al this erthe can tel ywis but I,
And eke there n'is no ſwalow ſwift ne ſwan
So wight of wing, ne halfe ſo yerne can flie,
For I canne ben, and that right ſodenly,
In heven, in hell, in paradiſe, and here,
And with my lady whan I wil deſire.
I am of counſel ferre and wide I wote
With lorde and lady, and ther privitie
I wotte it al, and be it hote or colde
They ſhall not ſpeke without licence of me;
I myne in ſoche as ſeſonable be,
For firſte the thing is thought within the hert
Er any worde oute from the mouth aſterte.
And with that word Thought bad farewel and
Eke furthe went I to ſene the Court'is guide, [yede;
And at the dore came in, ſo God me ſpede,
Twenty courteours of age and of aſſiſe,
Liche high and brode, and as I me adviſe
The Goldin Love and Ledin Love they highte,
The tone was ſad, the t'odir glad and light.
Yes, draw your hert with all your force and
To luſtineſſe, and ben as ye have ſeid, [might
And thinke that I no drope of favour hight,
Ne ner had unto your deſire obeide,
Til ſodenly me thought me was affraied
To ſene you waxe ſo dede of countinaunce,
And Pite bade me done you ſome plesaunce;
Oute of her ſhrine ſhe roſe from deth to live,
And in mine ere ful privily ſhe ſpake,
Doth not your ſervaunt hens away to drive,
Roſial, (quod ſhe) and than mine herte brake,
For tendiriche, and where I founde moch lacke
In your perſone, then I my ſelf bethought,
And ſaide This is the man myne herte hath fought.
Gramercy! Pite, might I not ſuffice
To yeve due laude unto thy ſhrine of golde?
God wotte I wold, for ſith that ye did riſe

From deth to live for me I am behold
To thankin you a thousand tymis tolde,
And eke my lady Rosial the shene,
Whiche hath in comforte set mine herte I wene.
And here I make myne protestacion,
And depely swere as mine powir to bene
Faithful, devoide of variacion,
And her forbere in angir or in tene,
And serviceable to my world'is quene
With al my reson and intelligence,
To done her honour high and reverence.
I had not spoke so sone the worde but she
My sovèrain did thanke me hertily,
And said, Abide, ye shal dwelle still with me
Till sesson come of May, for than truly
The king of Love and al his company
Shall holde his feste ful rially and welle;
And there I bode til that the sesson selle.

On May-day whan the lark began to rysse
To matins went the lusty nightingal
Within a temple shapin hauthorn wise,
He might not slepe in all the nyghtirtale,
But *Domine labia* gan he crie and gale;
My lippis opin, lord of Love, I crie,
And let my mouth thy praising now bewrye.
The egle sang *Venite* bodies al,
And let us joye to Love, that is oure helth,
And to the deske anon they gan to fall,
And who came late he precid in by stelth,
Then saied the faucon, our owen hertis welth,
Domine Dominus noster, I wote
Ye be the god that donne us bresne thus bote.
Cæli enarrant, said the popingay,
Your might is told in heven and firmament,
And then came in the goldfinche freshe and gay,
And saied this psalme with hertely glad intent,
Domini est terra, this Latin intent
The god of Love hath yerth in governaunce,
And than the wren gan scippin and to daunce;
Jube Domine, O lorde of Love! I pray
Commaunde me wel this lesson for to rede,
This legende is of al that woldin dye
Martirs for Love, God yef the soulis spede,
And to the Venus singe we oute of drede,
By influence of al thy vertue grete,
Beseching the to kepe us in our hete.
The seconde lesson robin redebreste sang,
Hail to the god and goddes of our lay!
And to the lectorn amorily he sprang,
Hail, (quod he) o thou freshe sesson of May!
Our monith glad that singin on the spray,
Hail to the flouris rede, and white, and blewe,
Whiche by ther vertue makith our lust new!
The thirde lesson the turtil dove toke up,
And therat lough the mavis in a scorne,
He said, O God! as mote I dine or suppe
This folishe dove wil give us al an horne,
There ben right here a M. bettir borne
To rede this lesson, whiche as wel as he,
And eke as hote, can love in al degre.
The turtil dove said, Welcom, welcom May,
Gladsom and light to lovirs that ben trewe,
I thanke the lord of Love that doth purvey
For me to rede this lesson al of dewe,
For in gode soth of corage I pursue
To serve my make tyll deth us must departe,
And than *Tu autem* sang he al aparte.
Te Deum amoris sang the thrustil cocke,
Tuball him self the firste musician
With key of armony coude not onlocke
So swete a tewne as that the thrustil can,
The book of Love we praisin (quod he) than,
And so done al the soulis gret and lite,
Honour we May in fals lovirs dispite.
Dominus regnavit, said the pecocke there,
The lord of Love, that mighty prince iwis,
He is receivd here and every where.
Nowe *Jubilate* sang, what menith this?
Said than the lynet, *Welcom lord of blisse.*
Oute sterte the owle with *Benedicite!*
What menith al this mery fare? (quod he.)
Laudate sang the larke with voice ful shril,
And eke the kight *O admirabile!*
This quire wil throw min eris pers and thril,
But what? welcom this May sesson (quod he)
And honoure to the lord of Love mote be,
That hath this feste so solempne and so hie;
Amen said al, and so said eke the pie.
And forth the cockowe gan procede anon
With *Benedictus!* thanking God in haste
That in this May wode visite them echon,
And gladdin them al while the fest shal laste,
And therwithal a laughtir oute he braste,
I thanke it God that I shuld ende the song,
And al the service whiche hath ben so long.
Thus sang they al the service of the feste,
And that was done right erly to my dome,
And furth goth al the Courte both most and leste
To fetche the flouris fresh, and braunch, and blom
And namelyhauthorn brought both page and grom
With fresh garlantis, party blew and white,
And than rejoysin in ther grete delite.
Eke eche at othir threwe the flouris bright
The prymerose, the violete, and the gold,
So than as I beheld the roial sight
My lady gan me sodenly behold,
And with a trewe love plitid many' a folde
She smot me through the very herte as blive
And Venus yet I thanke I am alive.

THE REMEDIE OF LOVE.

This book, taken for the moſt part out of The Proverbs of Solomon, is a warning to take heed of the deceitful company of women.

THE PROLOGUE.

Seyng the manyfolde inconvenience
Falling by unbrydlid proſperite,
Whiche is not temprid with moral prudence,
Nothing more welthie than in youth'is frelte,
Movid I am bothe of right and equite
To youth'is wele ſomwhat for to endite
Whereby he may himſelfin ſafecondite.
And firſte I note as a thinge moſt noyous,
And unto youth a grevous malady,
Amongis us callid love encombrous,
Vexyng alway yonge peple ſtraungely,
Offin by force it cauſith 'hem to dye,
And age is alſo turmentid by love,
I mene bineth the girdle' and not above.
Wherfore this werke, whiche is right laborous,
For age me nedith nat in honde to take,
To youthe me owith to be' obſequious;
Nowe I begin thus to worke for his ſake,
Whiche may the fervence of love aſlake,
To the lovir as a mitigative,
To him that is none a preſervative.
That mighty lorde whiche that me govirneth,
'Tis Youthe'l mene, meſure if that I pace
In every matir whiche that him concerneth:
Firſt, as is behoveful, I wol aſke grace,
And forthwithal now in this ſame place
Er I begin I wol yknele and ſay
Theſe fewe wordis, and him of helpe praye:
Thou flouring Youth, whiche haſt the avauntage
In ſtrength of body, in luſte, and beaute,
Alſo a precelling haſte above Age
In many' a ſinguler commodite,
Howe be it one thing he hath beyonde the
To thy moſt profite and gretiſt availe,
Whiche ſhuld the conduit, I mene ſad counſaile.
And yet, gode lorde, of a preſumpcion
I n'il deprave thy might and deite,
I lyve but undir thy protection,
I am thy ſubjecte, I were thy lyverie,
For thou arte grounde of my proſperite,
And freſhiſt flowir of al my garlande,
My ſingu'ler aide, as I well undirſtande.
But as he that oweth his lorde beſt ſervice
And entire faithe, his honour to ſupporte,
Right ſo I ſpeke, and in none othir wiſe;
I knowlege my ſelf one of the leſt ſorte
Of thy ſervauntes, to our eldirs comforte,
Drawe ſadde counſaile unto the if thou liſte,
The and thy powir who maie then reſiſte?
Fie on Age, I ſay, undir wordis fewe,
And his erroneous opinion!
What ſpekiſt of him whiche ſaieth moſte untrue
All youth to be of ill diſpoſicion?
Dampnith us all without excepcion,
And for a colerable avauntage
He ſaieth in hym reſtith all counſaill ſage.
Well ſothly maie ſadde counſaile in him reſt,
But yet his dedis ben full ferre therefro;
He maie wel ſayin with our pariſhe preſt,
Doith as I ſaie and not as I do;
For I my ſelfin know wele one or two
Well ſtrickin in age that for neighbourhedde
Ywollin to ther neighbours wivis bedde.
He will in preſence of the yonge man
Her clippe and kiſſe, ye, and her doune ylaie,
And to blere his eye thus he ſayith than,
O ſuffre yet olde Morell for to plaie,
Now have I doin that I can or maie:
Thus he ſayith her huſband for to queme,
That he nor no man ſhouldin not miſdeme.
In worde nor dede nedith him not be cole,
It'is impoſſible that he doe amiſſe:
If the yong man ſpeke, anon he ſaieth, Boie,
To rebuke age beſemeth the not iwis:
And thus his olde face aye his warrantis;
All is in hym but ſleight and ſubtilte,
And ferre from right reſon, I tellin the.
And, ſhortly, Age is not abovin me;
Age is impotent, and of no reſiſtence;
Age unweldie ne maie not fight nor fle;

What werin Age withoutin my defence?
Sad counſaile ſaieſt, Givith hym aſſiſtence;
Right reſon is freſhiſt where that I ame,
Wherfore in thy ſaiyng thou art to blame.
Sith reſon to me is rathir accompanied
Then unto Age, whiche is the opinion
Of every wiſe man not to be denied,
And ſith ſad counſaile procedith of reſon,
Sad counſaile in me hath his chefe mancion;
This is no naie; but what then is the ende
Of this thy ſuaſion; what doeſt entende?
Age to compare unto thyne excellence
I n'ill preſume hym ſo to dignifie,
Ye be not egall, how be it Experience
Hym avauntageth, for ſhe moſte certainly
Hym techith what thing to hym is contrary,
And ofte tofore ſe 'and warily eſchewe
Whiche thou nevir aſſaidiſt yet nor knewe.
Experience makith a man moſte certain
Of thing erthly, and of neceſſite
Sad counſaile requirith certaintie plain,
So ferre to movin thus whereto nede we?
But to my purpoſe, as thou commaundeſt me;
Shortly mine entent is thus, and none other,
Under thy licence to counſaile my brother.
How ſhouldiſt give any counſaile ſo yong,
Lacking experience? unto thine owne ſpeche
I report me, I wote as for thy tong
Will ſerve the right wel, but than for to tech
I doubte me leſt that thy wit woll not rech;
Youth and Experience thou ſaiſt be not convert,
How ſhouldiſt thou then teche well unexpert?
Scripture witniſſith that God will oft ſhitte
Fro the' hie wittid man and ſhew it the child,
To hym I mene that of his owne witte
Preſumeth not, but is debonaire and milde;
By counſaile I entend vertue to bilde,
Whiche of myne elders part have I borowed,
And part of experience, which I' have ſorowed.
Well, than, if it be as thou lettiſt fare
Shewe forthe thy doctrine, be not ought agaſte;
I woll the ſupporte; loke thou doe not ſpare
Maugre Age, although that he frete or gnaſte;
To alke Age counſail herein were but waſt:
Boldely begin; go forthe to the proceſſe;
Fere not, ſithins thou art of ſoche ſureneſſe.
Graunt mercie, lorde! ſithin it the doeth like
To licence me, now I woll and dare boldly
Aſſaile my purpoſe; with ſcriptures autentike
My werke woll I ground, undirſet, and fortefie:
Aſpire my ginnyng, o thou wode Furie
Alecto, with thy ſuſtirs! and in ſpeciall
To the, mother of Jelouſie, Juno, I call.

THE REMEDIE OF LOVE.

This werke who ſo ſhall ſe or yrede
Of incongruite do me not impeche;
Ordinatelie behoveth me firſt to procede
In deduccion thereof, right as the leche
His paciente's ſicknes oweth firſt for to ſeche,
The which knowen medicin he ſhould aplie,
And ſhortly as he can ſhape remedie.
Right ſo by counſail, willing the to' exhort,
O yong man proſperous! which doth abounde
In thy floures of luſte, belongeth on the ſort,
Me firſt to conſidir what 'is rote and ground
Of thy miſchefe, whiche is plainlie yfound
Woman, yfarcid with fraud and diſceipt,
To thy confuſion moſte allective baite.
Flie the miſwoman leſt ſhe the diſceve,
Thus ſaith Salomon, which taught was fullie
The falſhed of women in his daies to' conceve;
The lips of a ſtrumpet ben ſwetir than honie,
Her throte ſouplid with oile of flatirie,
How be it the ende and effecte of all
Bitterer is then any wormwode or gall.
Flie the miſwoman if thou love thy life:
Beware of the ſtraungir's blande eloquence;
Straungir I call her that is not thy wife;
Of her beautie have no concupiſcence,
Her countinaunce, pretendyng benevo'lence;
Beware her ſignes and eye ſo amiable,
Holde it for ferme thei ben diſcevable.
Lo, here an enſample what women be
In ther ſignis and continuance ſhortlie!
I woll ſhewin the how loviris thre
Ylovid one woman right entirelie,
Eche of them knewe othiri's maladie,
Wherefore it was all ther daily labour
Who coud approchin next in her favour.
At ſondrie ſeſons, as fortune requireth,
Severallie thei came to ſe her welfare,
But ones it happinid Love them ſo fireth,
To ſe ther ladie thei all would not ſpare;
Of othir's comyng none of them were ware,
Till all thei mette whereas thei in o place
Of ther ladie ſawe the deſirid face.
To ſuppir ſet, full ſmallie thei coude ete;
Full ſobir and demure in countinaunce,
There taried none of 'hem for any mete,
But on his ladie to give attendaunce,
And in ſecrete wiſe ſome ſignifiaunce

Of love to have, the whiche percevyng ſhe
Fetelie' executid thus her properte.
In due ſeſon, as ſhe alwaie aſpied
Every thyng to' execute convenientlie,
Her one lovir firſt frendèlie ſhe eyed,
The ſecond ſhe offred the cuppe ſo curtiſlie,
The thirde ſhe gave a tokin ſecretlie,
Undirneth the borde ſhe trade on his fote,
Through his entrailis tiklid the herte rote.
By your leve, might I here aſke a queſtion
Of you my maiſtirs that ſewe lov'is trace,
To you likely belongeth the ſoluçion
Whiche of theſe thre yſtode now in her grace!
Clerely to anſwere ye would aſke long ſpace,
The mattir is doubtfull and opinable;
To' aſcertain you I woll my ſelf enable.
Of the foreſayid thre my ſelf was one,
No man can anſwere it bettir then I;
Hertely of us bilovid was there none,
But Watt'is packe we bare all by and by,
Whiche at the laſt I my ſelf gan aſpie,
And time as me thought then I left the daunce:
O thoughtfull hertè, gret is thy grevaunce!
Hence fro me! hence! that me for to endite
Halpe aie here afore, o ye Muſis Nine!
Whilom ye were wont be mine aide and light,
My penne to dirçt, my brain to' illumine;
No lengir, alas! maie I ſewe your doctrine,
The freſhe luſtie metirs I wont to make
Have ben here afore I' uttirlie forſake.
Come hither Erinnys, and ye Furies all
Whiche fer ben undre' us nigh the nethir pole,
Where Pluto reignith, o kyng Infernall!
Sende out thine Arpies, ſend Anguiſhe and Dole,
Miſerie and Wo, leve ye me not ſole,
Of right be preſent muſt Pain and Turment,
The palè Deth beſemeth not to be abſent.
To me now I call all this lothſome ſort
My paines t' encreſe, my ſorowes to augment,
For worthie' I am to' be bare of all comfort,
Thus ſith I have conſumid and miſpent
Not onely my daies but fivefolde talent
That my Lorde gave me, I can not recompence,
I maie n'ot to derely' abye my negligence.
By the' path of penaunce yet woll I revert
To the well of grace, mercie there to fetche;
Deſpiſiſt not God the meke contrite herte,
Of the cocke crowe, alas! I would not retche,
And yet it is not late in the' ſeconde wetche:
Mercie ſhall I purchaçe by 'inceſſaunt criyng,
The mercies of our Lorde er ſhall I ſyng.
But well mayiſt thou waile, wicked woman,
That thou ſhuldeſt diſceve thus an innocent;
In recompence of my ſinne, ſo' as I can,
To' al wol I make and leve this monument,
In ſhewing part of thy falſhed is myne entent,
For all were to moche, I cann'ot, well I wote,
The cauſe ſhewith plainly he that thus wrote.
If al the yerth wer parchment ſcribable,
Spedie for the hande, and all manir wode
Wer hewed and proporcioned to pennis able,
All water ynke eithir in damme or flode,
Every man being a parfite ſcribe and gode,
The curſidneſſe yet and deſceipt of women
Coud not be ſhewid by the mene of penne.

I flie all odious reſemblaunces;
The devil'is brende call women I might,
Whereby man is encenſid to miſchaunces,
Or a ſtinkyng roſe, that faire is in ſight,
Or dedly' empoiſon, like the ſugir white,
Whiche by his ſwetneſſe cauſith man to taſt,
And ſodainly ſleeth and bringeth him to' his laſt.
It 'is not my manir to uſe ſoche langage,
But this my doctrine as I maie lawfullie
I' woll wholly grounde with auctoritie ſage,
Willing wiſedome and vertue edeſie:
Wine and women into apoſtaſie
Cauſe wiſemen to fall; what is that to ſaie?
Of wiſedome cauſe them to forget the waie;
Wherefore the wiſemen deith the adviſe,
In whoſe wordis can be founde no leſyng,
With the ſtraungir to ſittin in no wiſe
Whiche is not thy wife; fall not in clippyng
With her, but beware eke of her kiſſyng,
Kepe with her in wine no altercacion,
Leſt thyne herte fall by inclinacion.
Maie a man, thinkiſt, hide and ſafely lie
Fire in his boſome without empairement
And brenning of his clothes? or whider he may
Walke on hotte colis his fete not ybrente?
As who ſaith naie, and whereby is mente
This foreſaied proverbe and ſimilitude,
But that thou ridde the plainly to denude
From the flattirirs forgettyng her gide,
The gide of her youth, I mene Shamfaſtnes,
Whiche ſhould cauſe her maidinhed to abide,
Her Godd'is beheſte eke ſhe full recheleſſe
Not retching committeth to forgetfulnes,
Neithir God ne ſhame in her havyng place;
Nedis muſt ſoche a woman lackè grace.
And all that neighin her in waie of ſin
To tourne of grace ſhall lacke the influence,
The pathis of life no more to come in,
Wherefore firſt frendè the with Sapience,
Remembring God, and aftir with Prudence,
To thyne owne wele, that ſo thei may the kepe,
Unto thyne hertè left her wordis crepe.
In his boke where I take my moſtè ground,
And in his Proverbis, ſage Salomon
Tellith a talè which is plainly found
In the ſiveth chapter, whedir in dede don
Or mekely feined to our inſtruccion
Let clerkes determine, but this am I ſure,
Moche like thyng I my ſelf have had in ure.
At my windowe, ſaieth he, I lokid out,
Faire yongè peple where I ſawe many,
Emong 'hem all, as I lokid about,
To a yong man fortuned I lent myne eye,
Eſtraungid from his minde it was likely;
By the' ſtretè at a cornir, nigh his own hous,
He went about with eye right curious.
When that the daie his light began withdrawe,
And the night approchid in the twinlight,
How a woman came aad met hym I ſawe,
Talking with him undir ſhade of the night;
Now bleſſid be God (quod ſhe) of his might,
Whiche hath fulfillid myne hert'is deſire,
Aſlaked my painis, which were hote as fire.
And yet myne auchour, as it is gode ſkill,
To folowe I muſt tell her araiment;

She was full nicè ſoulis like to ſpill,
As nice in countinaunce yet as in garmente,
For janglyng ſhe was of reſt impaciente,
Wandiryng ſtill in no place ſhe yſtode,
But reſtleſſe now, and now out forthe ſhe yode:
Now in the hous ſhe was, now in the ſtrete,
Now at a cornir ſhe ſtandeth in awaite,
Inceſſauntly buſie her praie to gete,
To bring to the lure whom ſhe doith laite.
Now where I left unto my mattir ſtraite
I woll tournin again, how ſhe hym met,
Swetily kiſſid, and frendly him grette.
With wordes of curtiſie many' and diverſe,
Right as in part I have before ytolde,
Now as I can I purpoſe to reherſe
How ſhe flattiring faied with viſage bolde,
I have made vowes and offringes manifolde
For thy ſake, o myne herte! o my love dere?
This daie I thanke God all performid were;
Therefore I came out and made thus afterte,
Verie deſirous your welfare to ſe;
Now I have ſeen you pleſid is myne herte;
In faith ſhall none yhave my love but ye;
As true as I am to you be to me:
I praie you hertily, dere herte! come home,
No man ſhould be to me ſo much welcome.
And in gode faithe, the ſothè for to ſaie,
Your comyng unto me ran in my thought:
Harke in your ere; my bedde freſhe and gaie
I have behanged with tapettis new bought,
From Egypte and from far countries ybrought,
Steinid with many a luſtie freſhe hewe,
Excedyng golde or jaſpir in value:
My chambir is ſtrowed with mirre and inſenſe,
With ſote ſav'oring aloes and ſinnamome,
Brethyng an aromatike redolence,
Surmountyng olibane in any man's dome;
Ye ſhall bitwene my breſtes reſt if ye come;
Let us now have our deſirid halſyng,
For we maie ſafe be till in the mornyng.
Myne huſband is not at home, he is went
Forthe in his journey a farre waie from hence,
A bagge with money he hath with hym hent,
As hym thought nedefull was for his expence;
Unto my wordis give faith and credence;
Now is the monè yong and of light dulle,
Ere he come home it woll be at the fulle.
And thus craftily hath ſhe hym beſette
With her lime rodis, and pantir; and ſnare,
The ſelie ſoule ycaught hath in her nette,
Of her ſugrid mouthe, alas! nothyng ware;
And thus is he left graceleſſe and bare
Of helpe, and comfort, and ghoſtly ſuccour,
And, furthirmore, as ſayith myne auctour,
As a beſt ledde to his deth doith pante
This yong man folowith her in that ſtounde,
And as a wanton lambe full ignorante
How he is pulled and drawin to be bounde
Unto the tyme he hath his deth'is wounde,
And like a birde that haſtith to the grin,
Not knowyng the perill of' his life therein.
Now, gentle ſonne, ſaith Salomon, take hede,
My wordis in thy breſt kepe and make faſte,
Let her not thy mynde in her waies miſlede,
Be not deceivid, leſith not thy taſte,
Many hath ſhe woundid, many doune caſte,
Many ſtrong men by her hath loſte ther breth;
Her waies are waies of hell ledyng to deth.
And in this lite narracion precedente
The womanne's manifolde gilte I attende,
The yongè man, alas, how ſhe hath ſhent!
Diſcevid her huſbande her own next frend;
In theſe bothe her God ſhe doith offende;
To breke her ſpouſail to her is of no weight.
Furdirmore to ſhew woman's craft and ſleight,
A woman at her dore ſate on a ſtall
To ſe folke paſſe by ſtretes of the cite,
With eye and countinaunce eke ſhe gan call,
If there be any pretie' onè come to me,
Come hithir ye piggis nye, ye little babe!
At laſt ſhe faied to a young man hertlaſſe,
Of her deceipt unware and defenceleſſe.
Moche ſwetir, ſhe faith, and more acceptable,
Is drinke when it is ſtollin privily
Then when it' is taken in form avowable;
Bread hiddin and gottin jeoperdouſlie
Ymuſt nedis be ſwete and ſemblablie;
Veniſon ſtolin is aie the ſwetir,
The ferthir the narowir fet the bettir.
And whom this woman, ſaith Salomon, feſtes
The yong man wotith not whom ſhe doth fede;
Of the darke depeneſſe of hell ben her geſtes;
Beware, o yong man! therefore I the rede,
And how be it chiefly for thy gode ſpede
This werke to compile I have take in charge
I muſt of pitie my charitie' enlarge;
With the ſelie man whiche is thus begiled,
Her huſband I mene, I wol wepe and waile
His painfull infortune, whereby reviled
Cauſeleſſe he is, nevir to convaile;
Every man yong and olde woll him aſſaile
With wordes of occaſion with the loth name,
And, alas, gode ſoule! he nothyng to blame:
But ſhe whiche that coud ſo ill doe and wolde,
Hers be the blame for her foule demerite,
And leve that opprobrious name Cuckold
To apropir to hym as in diſpite:
Ranſake yet we wouldin if that we might
Of this wordè the true ortographie,
The verie diſcent and etymologie.
The well and grounde of the firſte invencion
To knowe the' ortographie we muſt derive,
Whiche is Coke and Cold in compoſicion,
By reſon as nigh as I contrive,
Then how it is writtin we knowe belive;
But yet, lo! by what reſon and what grounde
Ywas it of theſe two wordis compounde?
As of one cauſe to give very judgement,
The' etymology let us firſte beholde;
Eche lettir an whole worde doeth repreſent,
As C put for Colde, and O put for Olde,
K is for Knave; thus divers men don holde:
The firſte parte of this name we have yfounde,
Let us ethimologiſe the ſecounde.
As the firſte findir mente I am right ſure
C for Calot, for Of we havin O,
And L for Leude, and D for Demenure,
The craft of the' enventour ye maie ſe, lo!
How one name ſignifieth perſonis two,

A Colde Olde Knave, Cokcold himſelf wenyng,
And eke a Calot of Leude Demenyng.
The ſeconde cauſe of the' impoſicion
Of this foreſayid name was jelouſie:
To be jelouſe is gretiſt occaſion
To be cokcold that men can wel aſpie,
And though the paſſion be very firie,
And of continuell fervence and hete,
The pacient aye ſuffrith colde on his fete.
And who that 'is jelous and aye in a drede
Is full of melancolie and gallie ire;
His wiv'is noſe if ſhe onis miſſetrede
He woll cut off, ye, and he woll conſpire
His deth who evir that woll her deſire,
Whiche ſhe percevyng braſtith ſtreight his gall;
And anone his grete wodeneſſe doith fall.
As ſone as ſhe hath knit for him that knot
Now is he tame that was ſo ramagious;
Mekely ſittith he doune and takith his lot;
Layid ben now his lokes ſo furious,
And he but late as a coke batailous,
Hote in his quarell, to avenge hym bolde,
Now is he callid bothe Coke and Colde.
This ſaying, to' all curtiſie diſſonant,
Which yſemith that it of malice grewe,
In this rude tretiſe I ne woll not plant
As parcill thereof, but onely to ſhewe
The opinion of the talcatife ſhrewe,
Whiche in ill ſaiyng is ever merie
No man as I i thereof ſo werie.
But I as parcill of this my lite boke
Woll graffin in ſome ſadde counſaill wherby
The weddid man, if that he daigne to loke
In it, the bettir ſhall mowin hym gie,
And provide for his ſaied infortunie,
Whiche as I have ſayid with him complaine
I woll, as partinir of his grete paine.
As moſte expedient unto his wele
I woulde that all jelouſie were abjecte,
If he be jelous that he it concele,
And in his labour be full circumſpecte,
To knowe her waies if thei ſemin ſuſpecte,
And not for to breke, for one worde brokin
She woll not miſſe but ſhe woll be brokin.
Forbid her not that thou n'oldiſt have don,
For loke what thyng ſo e'ere ſhe is forbod
To that of all thyngis ſhe is moſt prone,
Namily if it be ill and no gode;
Till it be executid ſhe' is nigh wode:
Soche is a woman, and ſoche is her fete;
Her craft by craft than labour to defete.
If thou hereaftir, now a ſingle man,
Shouldiſt be jelous if thou haddeſt a wife,
Wedde not but if thou can truſt a woman,
For els ſhouldiſt thou lede a careſull life;
That thou moſte lothiſt ſhould ybe full rife;
Yet I ne will gainſaie matrimonie,
But *Rarellus eſt nubere quàm uri.*
That is to ſaie, Bettir is in wedlocke
A wife to take, as the churche doith kenne,
Then for to ben undir the fleſh'is yoke,
In fleſhlie luſtis alwaie for to brenne;
But, as I ſayid, for all jelous menne,
So thei livin chaſte, I holde it laſſe ill
That thei ne wedde not than them ſelfin ſpill.
The ſingle man whiche that is yet to wedde,
And not the weddid man, thus I arede,
To warne hym now he is to farre yſpedde,
It is all to late hym for to forbede,
But let hym take as for his owne nede
Soche counſaile as is hym before ytolde,
Theſe wordis folowyng eke to beholde.
Thy watir to kepe the wiſeman doth teche,
That thou in no wiſe let it have iſſue,
At a narowe rifte waie it woll yſeche;
And ſemblablie the woman that 'is untrue
To give her fre walke in all wiſe eſchue;
If ſhe at large, not at thine hande, walke
She woll the ſhamin, thou ſhalt it not balke.
Weddid or ſingle thus ſaith the wiſeman,
Her which that both daie and night evirmore
Lithe in thy boſome, wife or yet lemman,
Love not to hote, leſt thou repent it ſore,
Leſt ſhe the bryngin into ſome ill lore:
Thy wife not to love yet I n'ill ſupport,
But that thou doe not thus I the exhort.
Lo! if thou love her love thine honeſtie;
Be ſhe not idill for what woll betide;
If ſhe ſit idle' of very neceſſitie
Her minde woll ſerchin ſerre and eke wide,
Namelie if ſhe be not accompanide:
How accompanied? not with yonge men,
But with maidinis I mene or women.
Maidin ſervauntes be right convenient
In houſe to helpin to doe her ſervice,
In whom ſhe maie uſe her commanndement
In the ſeſon all at her owne device;
To techin 'hem gode yeve her thine advice
To make them huſwifis: thus buſineſſe
Maie yet refrainin her from idleneſſe.
But bid not her that thou wolt have her do,
Of thine entent that might be a lettyng,
But craftily encourage her therto
By othir menis, as by commendyng,
And not to moche, but dailyng mengyng
Bothe praiſe and blame, and in thy reſon
Firſt raiſe wiſily the place and ſeſon.
Of faithfull will and herte full tender
One thing I call into remembraunce
Again, which though my wit be to ſlender
Aſtir my powir and my ſuffiſaunce
I purpoſe to makin a purveiaunce,
Sith women of nature ben chaungeable,
Frele, and not ware, alſo diſcevable.
Be it that thy wife be excellently gode,
That none be bet of diſpoſicion,
In proceſſe of time ſhe might turn her mode
By ſome miſſe-liver's inſtigacion;
Divers men to thilke occupacion
Aplyin daily ther mynde and eke herte,
From ther godeneſſe frele women to perverte.
If thou aſpie any ſuſpect perſon,
Drawe to thy wife, beware in alle wiſe;
To hym nor her of thy ſuſpeccion
Breke not one worde though that thine herte agriſe;
Kindle no fire and no ſmoke woll ariſe:
Although he be of a corrupt entent
She peraventure is not of aſſent.

A SAIYNG OF DAN JOHN.

Thre bethe four thingis that maketh man a fole;
Honour firſt puttith him into outrage,
And aldir next ſolitarie and ſole;
The ſecond is unweldy crokid age;
Women alſo bring men into dotage;
And mighty wine in many divers wiſe
Diſtemprin folke which ben yholdin wiſe.

YET OF THE SAME.

Thre ben four thingis cauſing grete ſolye;
Honour firſt; and ſecond unwildy age;
Women and wine I dare eke ſpecify
Ymake wiſe men fallin into dotage;
Wherfore by counſell of philoſophers ſage
In gret honour lernith this rule of me,
With thine eſtate havith humilite.

MOTTO TO JACK UPLAND.

Of freris I have told before
Now in a making of a crede,
And yet I could tell worſe and more,
But men would werrien it to rede.

THE HOUSE OF FAME.

IN THREE BOKES.

In this book is ſhewed how the deeds of all men and women, be they good or bad, are carry'd by report to poſterity.

THE PROLOGUE.

God tourne us everie dreme to gode,
For it is wondir thyng by the' rode,
To my wite, what cauſith ſwevines
On the morowe or on evines,
And why the' effecte foloweth of ſome,
And of ſome it ſhall nevir come,
Why that is in avifion,
And this a revelacion,
Why this dreme, why that a ſweven,
And not to every man liche even,
Why this a fantome' why that oricles
I n'ot; but whoſo of theſe miracles
The cauſes knowith bet than I
Define he, for I certainly
Ne can 'hem not, ne nevir thinke
To buſie my witte for to ſwinke
To knowe of ther ſignificacions,
The gendrin ne the diſtinccions
Of the tymes of 'hem, ne the cauſis,
Or why that this is more then that is,
Or if folkis complexions
Make 'hem dreme of reflexions;
Or ellis thus, as other ſaine,
For the' grete febleneſſe of ther braine,
By abſtinence or by ſickneſſe,
By priſon, ſtrief, or grete diſtreſſe;
Or ellis by diſordinaunce,
Or natural accuſtomaunce,
That ſome men be to curious
In ſtudie or melancolious;
Or thus, ſo inly full of drede
That no man male 'hem bote rede;
Or ellis that devocion
Of ſome and contemplacion
Canſin to them ſoche dremis ofte;
Or that the cruil life unſofte
Of 'hem that unkind lovis leden,
That oftin hopin moche or dreden,
That purely ther impreſſions
Cauſin 'hem to have viſions:
Or if that ſpirites han the might
To makin folke to dreme on night,
Or if the ſoul of propir kinde
Be ſo perfite as men yfinde,
That it wele wote what is to come,
And that he warnith all and ſome
Of everiche of ther avintures
By avifions or by figures,
But that our fleſh ne hath no might
To underſtandin it aright,
For it is warnid to derkely,
But why the cauſe is not wote I;

Well wotin of this thyngè clerkes
That treten of that and othir werkes,
For I of none opinion
N'ill as now makin mencioh,
But only that the holy rode
Tourning us every dreme to gòde,
For nevir sithin I was borne,
Ne no man ellis me beforne,
Ymette I trowe right stedfastly
So wondirfull a dreme as I
The tenthe daie now of December,
The whiche, as I can remember,
I woll you tellin every dele:
But at beginnyng trustith wele
I woll make invocacion
With devoutè speciall devocion
Unto the god of Slepe anone,
That dwellith in a cave of stone,
Upon a streme that cometh fro Lete,
That is a flode of hell unswete,
Beside a fulke men clepe Cimerie
There slepith aye this god unmerie,
With his slepie thousande sonis;
That alwaie to slepè ther won is;
And to this god that I of rede
Praie I that he wollin me spedè
My swevin for to tell aright,
If every dreme stande in his might,
And he that movir is of all
That is and was, and evir shall,
So give 'hem joyè that it here
Of all that thei dremin to yere,
And for to standin all in grace
Of ther lovis, or in what place
That 'hem were levist for to stonde,
And shalde 'hem from poverte' and shonde,
And from every' unhappe and disese,
And sende 'hem that which maie 'hem plese,
That takith well and scornith nought,
Ne it misdemin in ther thought
Through malicious entencion;
And whoso through presampcion,
Or hate, or scorne, or though envie,
Dispite, or jape, or felonie,
Misdeme it, praie I Jesus gode,
Dreme he barefote or dreme he shode,
That every harme that any man
Hath had sithin the worlde began
Befall hym thereof or he sterve,
And graunt that he maie it deserve!
Lo! with right soche conclusion
As had of his avision
Cresus, that was the Kyng of Lyde,
That high upon a gibet dyde,
This prayir shall he have of me,
I am no bette in charite,

THE FIRST BOKE.

Now herkin, as I have you saied,
What that I mette or I abraied.
Of December the tenith daie
When it was night to slepe I laie.
Right as I was wonte for to doen,
And fill aslepè wondir sone,
As he that was werie forgo
On pilgrimagè miles two
To the corps of Saint Leonarde,
To makin lithe that erst was harde.
But as me slept me mette I was
Within a temple' imade of glas,
In whiche there werin mo images
Of golde standyng in sondrie stages,
Sette in mo riche tabirnacles,
And with perrè mo pinnacles,
And mo curious portraituris
And queint manir of figuris
Of golde worke then I sawe evir;
But certainly I n'ist nevir
Where that it was, but well wist I
It was of Venus redily
This temple, for in purtraiture
I sawe anone right her figure
Nakid ystetyng in a se,
And also on her hedde parde
Her rosy garland white and redde,
And her combe for to kembe her hedde,
Her dovis, and Dan Cupido
Her blindè sonne, and Vulcano,
That in his face ywas full broune,
But as I romid up and doune

I founde that on the wall there was
Thus writtin on a table' of bras;
I wull now ſyng, if that I can,
The armies and alſo the man
That firſt came through his deſtine
Fugitife fro Troye the countre
Into Italie, with full moche pine,
Unto the ſtondis of Lavine:
And tho began the ſtorie' anone
As I ſhall tellin you echone.
Firſt ſawe I the diſtruccion
Of Troie thorough the Greke Sinon
With his falſe untrue forſwerynges,
And with his chere and his leſynges,
That made a horſe brought into Troye
By whiche Trojans loſte all ther joye.
And aftir this was graved, alas!
How Ilion's caſtill aſſailed was
And won, and Kyng Priamus ſlain,
And Polites his ſonne certain,
Diſpitouſly of Dan Pyrrhus.
And next that ſawe I howe Venus,
When that ſhe ſawe the caſtill brende,
Doune from hevin ſhe gan diſcende,
And bade her ſonne Æneas flie,
And how he fled, and how that he
Eſcapid was from all the pres,
And toke his fathre', olde Anchiſes,
And bare hym on his backe awaie,
Crying Alas and Welawaie!
The whiche Anchiſes in his hande
Bare tho the goddis of the lande,
I mene thilke that unbrennid were.
Then ſawe I next that all in fere
How Creuſa, Dan Æneas wife,
Whom that he lovid all his life,
And her yong ſonne clepid Julo,
And eke Aſcanius alſo,
Fleddin eke with full drerie chere,
That it was pite for to here,
And in a foreſt as thei went
How at a tournyng of a went
Creüſa was iloſte, alas!
That rede not I how that it was,
How he her ſought, and how her ghoſte
Bad hym to flie the Grekis hoſte,
And ſaied he muſt into Italie,
As was his deſtinie ſauns faile,
That it was pitie for to here,
When that her ſpirite gan appere,
The wordis that ſhe to hym ſaied,
And for to kepe her ſonne hym praied;
There ſawe I gravin eke how he,
His fathir eke and his meinè,
With his ſhippis began to faile
Toward the countrey of Italie
As ſtreight as ere thei mightin go.
There ſawe I eke the cruill Juno,
That art Dan Jupiter his wife.
That haſt ithatid all thy life
Mercileſs all the Trojan blode,
Rennin and crie as thou were wode
On Æolus, the god of Windes,
To blewin out of alle kindes
So loudè, that he ſhould ydrenche
Lord and ladie, and grome and wenche,
Of all the Tojanis nacion
Without any' of ther ſalvacion.
There ſawe I ſoche tempeſt ariſe
That evèry herte might agriſe
To ſe it paintid on the wall.
There ſawe I eke gravin withall
Venus, how ye, my ladie dere!
Ywepyng with full wofull chere,
Yprayid Jupiter on hie
To ſave and kepin that navie
Of that dere Trojan Æneas,
Sithins that he yonr ſonne ywas.
There ſawe I Jovis Venus kiſſe,
And grauntid was of the' tempeſt liſſe.
There ſawe I how the tempeſt ſtente,
And how with allè pine he went
And privilie tokè a rivage
Into the countrie of Carthage,
And on the morowe how that he
And a knight that hight Achate
Ymettin with Venus that daie
Goyng in a full queinte araie,
As ſhe had be an huntireſſe,
With winde blowing upon her treſſe,
And how Æneas gan to plaine,
When that he knewe her, of his paine,
And how his ſhippis dreint ywere
Or els iloſte, he n'iſte not where,
How ſhe began hym comforte tho,
And bade hym unto Carthage go.
And there he ſhould his folke yfinde
That in the ſe were left behinde:
And, ſhortly of this thyng to pace,
She made Æneas ſo in grace
Of Dido, Quene of that countre,
That, ſhortly for to tellin, ſhe
Became his love, and let hym do
All that weddyng ylongith to:
What ſhould I ſpekin it more quainte,
Or pain me my wordis to painte?
To ſpeke of love it woll not be,
I can not of that faculte,
And eke to tellen of the manere
How that thei firſt acquaintid were
It were a long proceſſe to tell,
And ovir long for you to dwell
There ſawe I grave howe Æneas
Tolde to Dido every caas
That hym was tidde upon the ſe.
And eft gravin was how that ſhe
Made of hym, ſhortly at a worde,
Her life, her love, her luſt, her lorde,
And did to hym all reverence,
And laied on hym all the diſpence
That any woman might ydo,
Wenyng that it had all be ſo
As he her ſwore, and hereby demed
That he was gode, for he ſoche ſemed:
Alas! what harme doth apperence
When it is falſe in exiſtence!
For he to her a traitour was,
Wherefore ſhe ſlowe her ſelf, alas!

Lo, how a woman doeth amis
To love him that unknowin is!
For by Chriſt lo thus it farith,
It is not all golde that glarith;
For al ſo broke I well myne hedde
There maie be undir godelihedde
Covirid many a foreude vice;
Therefore let no wight be ſo nice
To take a love only for chere,
Or ſpeche. or for frendly manere,
For this ſhall every woman finde
That ſome man of his purè kinde
Woll ſhewin outward the fairiſt
Till he have caught that what hym liſt,
And then anon woll cauſis finde,
And ſwere how that ſhe is unkinde,
Or falſe, or privie', or double was:
All this ſaie I by Æneas
And Dido, and her nicè leſt,
That lovid all to ſone a geſt;
Wherefore I woll ſaie o proverbe,
That *He that ſullie knoweth the herbe*
Maie ſafely laie it to his eye;
Withoutin drede this is no lie.
But let us ſpeke of Æneas
How he betrayid her, alas!
And left her full unkindèlie,
So when ſhe ſawe all uttirlie
That he would her of trouthè faile,
And wendin from her into' ttaile,
She gan to wring her handis two.
Alas! (quod ſhe) that me is wo!
Alas! is every man thus true,
That every yere woll have a newe,
If it ſo longè tyme endure,
Or ellis thre peravinture?
And thus of one he woll have fame
In magnifying his owne name,
An othir for frendſhip ſaith he,
And yet there ſhall the thirde ybe,
That is ytakin for delite,
Lo! 'or els for ſinguler profite.
In ſoche wordis began complaine
This wofull Dido of her paine,
As me mette dremyng redily,
None other auctour aledge woll I,
Alas, (quod ſhe) my ſwetè herte!
Have pitie on my ſorowes ſmerte,
And flè me not; go not awaie.
O wofull Dido! welawaie!
(Quod ſhe) unto her ſelvin thò.
O Æneas! what woll ye do?
O that your love, neithir your bonde,
Which that ye ſwore with your right honde,
Ne yet my my cruill deth, (quod ſhe)
Maie holdin you ſtill here with me!
O! have ye' of my deth no pite?
Iwis, myne own dere herte! that ye
Knowin full well that nevir yet,
As farre as evir I had wit
Agilte you in thought ne in dede.
O! have ye men ſoche godelihede
In ſpeche, and ner a dele of trouthe?
Alas, alas! that er had routhe
Any woman on a falſe man!
Now I ſe well and tellin can
We wretchid women can no arte,
For certaine for the morè parte
Thus we ben ſervid everichone,
How ſore ſo that ye men can grone;
Anon as we have you received
Full certainlie we ben deceved,
For though your love laſt a ceſon,
Waite upon the concluſion,
And loke eke how ye determine,
And for the more partè define;
O welawaie that I was bòrn!
For thorough you my name is lorne,
And mine actis are redde and ſong
O'er all this lande in every tong.
O wickid Fame! for there n'is
Nothing ſo ſwifte, lo! as ſhe is;
O ſothe is, *Every thing is wiſt*
Though it be coverde with the miſt:
Eke though that I might durin ever
That I have done recovre' I never,
That it ne ſhall be ſaied, alas!
I ſhamid was through Æneas,
And that I ſhall thus judgid be,
Lo! right as ſhe hath doen now ſhe
Woll doen eftſonis hardily,
Thus ſaie the peple privily;
But that is doen n'is not done:
But all her complaint ne her mone
Certain availed her not a ſtre.
And when ſhe wiſt ſothely that he
Was forthe into his ſhip agone
She into chambir went anone,
And callid on her ſuſtir Anne,
And gan her to complainin thanne,
And ſaied that ſhe the cauſe ywas
That ſhe firſt lovid him, alas!
And firſt counſailid her thereto;
But what whan this was ſaied and do
She roſte her ſelvin to the herte,
And deide thorough the woundis ſmerte;
But all the manir how ſhe deide,
And all the wordis how ſhe ſeide,
Who ſo to knowe it hath purpoſe,
Rede Virgile in Æneidos,
Or the Epiſtils of Ovide,
What that ſhe wrote or that ſhe dide;
And n'ere it to longe to endite
By God I would it here ywrite.
But welawaie! the harme and routh
That hath betide for ſoche untrouth,
As men maie oft in bokis rede,
And al daie ſeen it yet in dede,
That for to thinkin it tene is,
Lo! Demophon, Duke of Athenis,
How he forſwore him falſily,
And trayid Phyllis wickidly,
That Kingis doughtir was of Trace,
And falſely gan his termè pace;
And whan ſhe wiſt that he was falſe
She hong herſelf right by the halſe,
For he had doen her ſuch untrouthe;
Lo! was not this a wo and routh?

Eke loke howe falſe and rechèles
Was to Briſeida Achilles,
And Paris eke to Oenone,
And Jaſon to Hypſiple,
And eſte Jaſon to Medea,
And Hercules to Deianira,
For he left her for Iole,
That made hym take his deth parde.
How falſe was eke Duke Theſus,
That as the ſtorie tellith us
How he betrayid Adriane?
The devill be his ſoul'is bane!
For, had he laughid or iloured,
He muſt have ben anone devoured
If Ariadne ne had be;
And for ſhe had of hym pite
She made hym fro the deth eſcape,
And he made her a full falſe jape;
For aftir this within a while
He left her ſlepyng in an ile,
Deſert alone right in the ſe,
And ſtale awaie and let her be,
And toke her ſuſtir Phædra tho
With hym, and gan to ſhippe ygo
And yet he had yſworne to here,
On all that evir he could ſwere,
That ſo ſhe ſavid hym his life
He would takin her to his wife,
For ſhe deſirid nothinge elles
In certain, as the boke us telles.
But for to' excuſe this Æneas
Fulliche of all his grete treſpas
The boke ſayith withoutin faile
The goddes bad hym go to Itaile,
And levin Affriques regioun
And faire Dido and her faire toun.
Tho ſawe I grave how to Itaile
Dan Æneas gan for to ſaile,
And how the tempeſt all began,
And howe he loſt his ſteriſman,
Which that the ſterne or he toke kepe
Smote ovir the borde as he ſlepe.
And alſo ſaugh I how Sibile
And Æneas beſide an ile
To helle went yfere for to ſe
His father Anchiſes the fre;
And how he there founde Palinurus,
And alſo Dido and Deiphobus,
And everiche tourment eke in hell
Sawe he, whiche long is for to tell,
Whiche painis who ſo liſte to knowe
He muſt redin many a rowe
In Virgile or in Claudian,
Or Dantes, that it tellin can.
Tho ſawe I alle the arivaile
That Æneas made in Itaile,
And with Kyng Latine his tret,
And all the battailis that he
Was at himſelfin and his knightes
Or he had all iwonne his rightes,
And how he Turnus refte his life,
And wan Lavinia to his wife,
And all the marveilous ſignals
Of the goddis Celeſtials,
How maugre Juno Æneas,
For all her ſleighte and her compas,
Atchivid all his avinture,
For Jupiter toke on hym cure
At the praier of his modir Venus,
Whiche I praie alwaie ſavin us,
And us aie of our ſorowes light.
When I had ſein all this ſight
Within this noble temple thus,
Hey! Lord, thought I, that madiſt us,
Yet ſawe I never ſoche nobleſſe
Of imagis, nor ſoche richeſſe,
As I ſe gravid in this churche;
But nought wote I who did 'hem worche,
Ne where I am, ne' in what countre,
But now will I out gone and ſe,
Right at the wickit, if I can
Seen oughtwhere ſteryng any man
That maie me tellen where I am.
When I out of the dore cam
I faſte aboutin me behelde,
Then ſawe I but a largè felde
As farre as evir I might ſe,
Withoutin toune, or houſe, or tre,
Or buſhe or graſſe, or arid lande,
For all the felde was but of ſande
As ſmal as men maye ſe at eye
In the deſertis of Lybye;
Ne ferthir no manir creture
That is yformid by Nature
Ne ſawe I, me to rede or wiſſe;
O Criſt! thought I, that art in bliſſe,
From fantom and illuſion
Me ſave, and with devocyon
Myne eyin to the heven I caſte;
Tho was I ware, lo! at the laſte,
That faſtè by the ſonne on hie,
As kennin myght I with mine eye,
Me thought I ſawe an egle ſore.
But that it ſemid mochil more
Than I had anye egle' yſeine,
This is a ſothe as deth certaine,
It was of golde, and ſhone ſo bright,
That nevir ſawe men ſoche a ſight,
But yf the hevin had ywonne
Al newe of God anothir ſonne,
So ſhone the eg'lis fethirs bright,
And ſomwhat downwarde gan it lyghte.

THE SECOND BOKE.

Nowe herkin everye manir man
That Englishe undirstande can,
And lystith of my dreme to here,
For now at erst shallin ye lere
So sely' and dredefull avysion,
That I saye neithir Scipion
Ne Kinge Nabugodnosore,
Pharao, Turnus, ne Alcanore,
Ne mettin soche a dreme as this.
Nowe, o thou faire blisful Cipris!
So be my favour at this time
That ye me to endite and rime
Helpith that in Parnassus dwel,
Besyde Helicon the clere wel.
O Thought! that wrote al that I met,
And in the tresorie it set
Of my braine, now shal men yse
If any vertue in the be;
To tellin al my dreme aright
Nowe kithe thy engin and thy might.
This egle', of whiche I have you tolde,
That with fethirs shone al of golde,
Whiche that so hie began to sore,
I gan beholdin more and more
To sene her beaute and the wonder,
But nevir was that dente of thonder,
Ne that thinge that men callin foudre,
That smite sometime a toure to poudre,
And in his swifte comminge brende,
That so swithe gan downwarde discende
As this foule whan that it beheldo
That I arowne was in the felde,
And with his grim pawis so stronge
Within his sharpe nailis longe
Me fleyng at a swappe he hent,
And with his fours again up wente,
Me carying in his clawis starke
As lightly' as I had ben a larke,
Howe hye I can not tellin yowe,
For I came up I n'ist ner howe,
For so astonied and asweved
Was every virtue in me heved,
What with his fours and with my dred,
That al my felinge gan to ded;
For why? it was a gret affraye.
Thus I longe in his clawis laye,
Til at the last he to me spake
In mann'is voice, and said, Awake,
And be not agast so for shame,
And callid me tho by my name;
And for I shulde bettir abraide
Me to awakin thus he saide,
Right in the same voice and stevin
That usith one I can nevin,
And with that voice, the sothe to saine,
My minde ycame to me againe,
For it was godely saide to me,
So n'as it nevir wonte to be;
And herewithal I gan to stere
As he me in his fete ybere,
Til that he felte that I had hete,
And felte eke tho mine herte ybete;
And tho gan he me to disporte,
And with gentil wordes me comforte,
And sayid twise, by Saint Mary
Thou arte a noyous thinge to cary,
And nothinge nedith it parde,
For all so wisly God helpe me
As thou no harme shalt have of this,
And this case that betidde the is
Is for thy lore and for thy prowe:
Lette se; darist thou loke yet nowe?
Be ful ensurid boldily
I am thy frende: and therewith I
Gan for to wondir in my minde.
O God! (quod I) that madist al kinde,
Shal I none otherwise ydie?
Whedir Jove wil me stellysie,
Or what thing may this signifie?
I' am neithir Enocke ne Helye,
Ne Romulus ne Ganimede,
That werin bore up, as men rede,
To hevin with Dan Jupiter,
And made the goddis botiler;
Lo! this was tho my fantasie.
But he that bare me gan aspie
That I so thought, and sayid this;
Thou demist of thy selfe amis,

For Jove ne is not thereaboute,
I dare the put ful out of doute,
To makin of the yet a ſterre;
But er I berin the moche ferre
I wil the tellin what I am,
And where thou ſhalte, and why I came
To doin this, ſo that thou take
Gode herte, and not fore fere yquake.
Gladly, (quod I.) Now wel, (quod he.)
Firſt I, that in my fete have the,
Of whom thou haſt grete fere and wonder,
And dwellinge with the god of Thonder,
Whiche men ycallin Jupiter,
That doth me flyin ful ofte fer
To do all his commaund ment,
And for this cauſe he hath me ſent
To the; herkin nowe by thy trouthe:
Certaine he hath of the grete routhe,
For that thou haſt ſo truily
So long ſervid ententifly
His blinde nephewe Cupido
And the faire quene Venus alſo
Withoutin guerdon ever yet,
And natheles haſt ſet thy wit,
Althoughe in thy hed ful lite is,
To make bokes, ſongis, and ditis,
In rime or ellis in cadence,
As thou beſt canſt, in reverence
Of Love and of his ſervauntes eke,
That have his ſervice ſought and ſeke,
And paineſt the to praiſe his arte,
Althoughe thou haddiſt nevir parte;
Wherfore, ſo wiſly God me bleſſe,
Jovis yhalte it grete humbleſſe
And vertue eke that thou wilt make
Anight ful oft thine hed to ake
In thy ſtudye, ſo thou ywriteſt,
And evirmore of love enditeſt,
In honour of him and praiſinges,
And in his folkis fourthiringes,
And in ther matir al deviſeſt,
And not him ne his folke diſpiſeſt,
Althoughe thou maiſte go in the daunce
Of them that him lyſt not avaunce;
Wherfore, as I nowe ſaide, ywis
Jupiter conſidrith wel this,
And als, beauſire, of othir thinges,
That is, that thou haſte no tidinges
Of Lov'is folke if they be glade,
Ne of nothinge els that God made,
And not onely fro ferre countre
That no tidinges comin to the,
Not of thy very neighbouris,
That dwellen almoſt at thy doris,
Thou heriſt neithir that ne this,
For whan thy labour al done is,
And haſte made al thy reckininges,
In ſtede of reſte and of newe thinges
Thou goeſt home to thine houſe anone,
And al ſo dombe as any ſtone
Thou ſittiſt at anothir boke
Tyll fully daſid is thy loke,
And lyviſt thus as an hermite,
Although thine abſtinence is lyte;

And therefore Jovis throughe his grace
Wil that I bere the to a place
Whiche that yhight The Houſe of Fame,
And for to doe the ſport and game,
In ſome recompenſacion
Of thy labour and devocion
That thou haſte hadde, lo! cauſeleſs,
To god Cupido the recheles,
And thus this god throughe his merite
Wil with ſome manir thing the quite,
So that thou wilte be of gode chere;
For truſtith wel that thou ſhalte here,
Whan we ben comen there as I ſay,
Mo wondir thingis dare I lay,
And of Love's folke mo tidingis,
Bothe ſothſawis and leſingis,
And of mo lovis newe begon,
And longe ſervid tyl love is won,
And of mo lovirs caſuelly
That ben betide, no man wote why,
But as a blinde man ſtarteth an hare,
And more jolite and welfare,
Whilis they findin love of ſtele,
As thinkin men, and o'r al wele
Mo diſcordes and mo jalouſies,
Mo murmures and mo novilries,
And alſo mo diſſimulacions,
And eke feinid reperacions,
And mo berdis in two houres,
Withoutin raſour or ſiſoures
Ymade, than grainis be of ſandes,
And eke mo holdinge in mo handes,
And alſo mo renovelaunces,
Of olde forletin aqucintaunces,
Mo love dayis and mo accordes,
Than on inſtrumentis ben cordes,
And eke of love mo exchaungis
Than evir corne were in graungis;
Unnethis muſt thou trowin this,
(Quod he.) No ſo', helpe me God as wis,
(Quod I.) No, why? (quod he.) For it
Were impoſſible to my wit,
Although that Fame had al the pyes
In al a relme and al aſpies,
Howe that yet he ſhulde here al this
Or they cryin. O! yes, yes,
(Quod he, to me) that can I preve
By reſon worthy for to leve,
So that thou give thin advertence
To underſtandin my ſentence.
Firſt ſhalt thou here where ſhe dwellith,
Right ſo as thine owne boke tellith:
Her palais ſtanderh, as I ſhal ſay,
Right even amiddis of the way
Betwene hevin and yerthe, and ſe,
That what ſo er in al theſe thre
Is ſpoken' in prive or apperte,
The way therto is ſo overte,
And ſtante eke in ſo juſte a place,
That every ſowne mote to it pace,
Or what ſo cometh from anie tongne,
Whethre' it be rownid, redde, or ſongn,
Or ſpokin in fuerte or drede,
Certaine it motin thidir nede.

Nowe herkin wel; for why! I wil
Ytellin the a propir ſkil,
And worthy demonſtracion
In mine imaginacion.
Geffray, thou wottiſt full wel this,
That every kindely thinge that is
Yhath a kyndely ſtede, there he
May beſt in it conſervid be,
Unto whiche place every thinge,
Thorough his kyndely enclininge
Ymevith for to comin to
Whan that it is away therfro;
As thus, lo! thou maiſte al day ſe,
Take any thinge that hevy be,
As ſtone or led, or thinge of weight,
And bere it ner ſo hie on height,
Let go thine hande it fallith downe;
Right ſo ſay I by fire or ſowne,
Or ſmoke, or othir thingis light,
Alway they ſeke upwarde on height,
Light thinges up and hevie down charge
While everiche of 'hem be at large;
And for this cauſe thou maiſt wel ſe
That every rivir to the ſe
Enclinid is to go by kynde,
And by theſe ſkillis as I finde
Have fiſhes dwellinge in flode and ſe,
And treis eke on the erthe be:
Thus every thinge by his reſon
Hath his owne propir mancion,
To whiche he ſekith to repaire
There as it ſhuldin nat appaire.
Lo! this ſentence is knowin couthe
Of every philoſophir's mouthe,
As Ariſtotle' and Dan Platone,
And othir clerkis many one;
And to confirmin my roſoune
Thou wotiſt wel that ſpeche is ſowne,
Or ellis no man might it here;
Nowe herkin what I wol the lere.
Sowne is not but eyre ybrokin,
And every ſpeche that is ſpokin,
Where loude or ſtive, ſoule or faire,
In his ſubſtaunce ne is but eyre;
For as flame is but lighted ſmoke,
Right ſo is ſowne but eyre ybroke:
But this may be in many wiſe,
Of the whiche I will the deviſe,
As ſowne comith of pype or harpe,
For whan a pype is blowin ſharpe
The eyre is twiſt with violence
And rent; lo! this is my ſentence:
Eke whan that men harpeſtringis ſmyte,
Whedir that it be moche or lyte,
Lo! with the ſtroke the eyre it breketh,
And right ſo breketh it whan men ſpeketh;
Thus woſt thou wel what thing is ſpeche:
Nowe henniſorthe I wil the teche
Howe everiche ſpeche, voice, or ſowne,
Throughe his multiplicacioune,
Thoughe it were pipid of a mouſe,
Mote nedis come to Fam'is Houſe:
I prove it thus; takith hede nowe
By experience, for if that thou
Threwe in a watir nowe a ſtone,
Wel woſte thou it wil make anone
A lityl roundil as a circle,
Para'venture as brode as a covircle,
And right anone thou ſhalte ſe wele
That circle cauſe anothir whele,
And that the thirde, and ſo forthe, brother,
Every circle cauſinge other
Moch brodir than himſelfin was,
And thus from roundil to compas
Eche aboutin othir goinge
Ycauſith of othirs ſteringe
And multiplying evirmo,
Tyl that it be ſo far ygo
That it at bothe brinkis be,
Although thou mayiſt it not ſe
Above, yet gothe it alwaye under,
Although thou thinke it a grete wonder,
And whoſo ſaithe of trouthe I vary,
Bydde him provin the contrary:
And right thus every worde ywis,
That loude or pryve' yſpokin is,
Ymovith firſte an eyre aboute,
And of his movinge out of doute
Anothir eyre anone is moved,
As I have of the watir proved,
That every circle cauſith other;
Right ſo of eyre, my leve brother,
Everiche eyre anothir ſterith
More and more, and ſpethe up berith,
Or voiſe or noyſe, or worde or ſowne,
Aye through multiplicaciowne,
Tyl it be at The Houſe of Fame,
Take it in erneſt or in game.
Nowe have I tolde, if thou have mind,
Howe ſpeche or ſowne of pure kinde
Enclinid is upward to meve,
This mayiſt thou fele wel by preve,
And that ſame kindly ſtede ywis,
That every thinge enclined to is,
Yhath alſo his kyndelyche ſtede,
That ſhewith it withoutin drede,
That kindely the mansions
Of everyche ſpeche, of every ſoune,
All be it either foule or faire,
Yhath his kindely place in eyre;
And ſith that every thinge ywis
Out of his kindely place ywis
Ay movith thidir for to go,
Yf that it awaye be therfro,
As I have before provid the,
It ſhewith every ſonne perde
Ymovith kindely to pace
As up into his kindely place;
And this place of whiche I the tel,
There as Fame doth yliſte to dwell,
Is ſette amiddis of theſe thre,
Hevin, and erthe, and eke the ſe,
As moſte conſervatife of ſoun;
Than is this the concluſion
That every ſpeche of every manne,
As I the tellin firſte beganne,
Ymovith up on height to pace
Kindely unto Fam'is place.

Tellith me this nowe faithfully,
Have I not provid thus ſimply,
Withoutin any ſubtilte
Of ſpeche, or grete prolixyte
Of termis of philoſophie,
Of figuris of poetrie,
Or colouris of rhetorike?
Perde it oughtin the to like,
For harde langage and harde matere
Is incombrous for the to here
At onis, woſte thou not wel this?
And I anſwerid and ſaid, Yes.
Ah ha! (quod he) lo! ſo I can
Leudlye unto a leudè man
Yſpeke, and ſhewin him ſoche ſkilles
That he maye ſhake 'hem by the hylles,
So palpable they ſhuldin be;
But tel me this nowe praye I the,
Howe thinketh the my conclufioun?
Parde a gode perſuaſioun
(Quod I) it is, and lyke to be,
Right ſo as thou haſte provid me.
By God (quod he) and as I leve
Thou ſhalte have it or it be eve,
Of every worde of this ſentence
A profe by thine experience,
And with thine eris herin wel
The toppe and taile, and every del,
That every worde that ſpokin is
Comith into Fame's Houſe ywis
As I have ſaide; what wilt thou more?
And with this worde uppir to fore
He began, and ſaide, By ſainte Jame
Nowe wyll we ſpekin al of game.
Howe fareſt thou now? quod he to me.
Right wel, (quod I.) Now ſe (quod he)
By thy trouthè yondir adowne,
Where that thou knowiſt any towne
Or houſe, or any othir thinge,
And whan thou haſte of ought knowynge
Tho lokith that thou warnè me,
And I anone ſhal tellin the
How farre that thou arte nowe therfro.
And I adoune gan lokin tho,
And behelde the feldis and plainis,
Nowe hyllis and nowe mountainis,
Nowe valeys and nowe foreſtis,
And nowe unnethis grete beſtis,
Nowe riveris nowe citeis,
Nowe townis and nowe grete treis,
Nowe ſhippis ſailinge in the ſe;
But thus ſone in a whilè he
Was flowin fro the grounde ſo hye
That al the worlde, as to myne eye,
No more yſemid than a pricke,
Or ellis was the eyre ſo thicke
That I ne might it not diſcerne;
With that he ſpake to me ſo yerne,
And ſaid, Seiſt thou any token,
Or ought that in this worlde's of ſpoken?
I anſwered Naye. No wondir is,
(Quod he) for halfe ſo hye as this
N'as Alexandre', of Macedon
Kynge, ne of Rome Dan Scipion,
That ſawe in dreme at pointe deviſe
Heven and erthe, hel and paradiſe,
Ne eke the bold wretche Dædalus,
Ne yet his childe, nice Icarus,
That flewe ſo hiè that the hete
Hys wingis molte, and he fel wete
In mydde the ſe, and there he dreinte,
For whom was made a grete complainte.
Nowe tourne upwarde (quod he) thy face,
And beholde here this largè place,
This eyre, but loke that thou ne be
Adrad of hem that thou ſhalt ſe,
For in this regioun certaine
Dwellith many a citizeine,
Of whiche yſpekith Dan Plato,
Theſe ben the eyriſhe beſtis, lo!
And tho ſawe I al the menye
That bothe ygone and alſo flye.
Lo there! (quod he) caſt up thine eye,
Se yondir, lo! the Galaxie,
The whiche men clepe The Milky Wey,
For it is white, and ſome parfay
Ycallin it han Watlynge ſtrete,
That onis was brente with the hete,
Whan that the ſunn'is ſonne the rede,
Which that hite Phaëton, wolde lede
Algate his fathir's carte and gie.
The carte horſis gan wel eſpie
That he ne coude no governaunce,
And gonin for to lepe and praunce,
And bere him now up and nowe downe
Tyl that he ſawe the Scorpiowne,
Whiche that in heven a ſigne is yit,
And he for fere yloſte his wit
Of that, and let the reinis gone
Of his horſis, and they anone
Sone up to mounte and downe diſcende,
Tyl bothe the eyre and erthe ybrende,
Tyl Jupiter, lo! at the laſte
Hym ſlewe, and frp the carte ycaſte.
Lo! is it not a grete miſchaunce
To let a fole have governaunce
Of thinges that he can not demaine?
And with this worde, ſothe for to ſaine,
He gan alway uppir to ſore,
And gladid me than more and more,
So faithfully to me ſpake he.
Tho gan I to loke undir me,
And behelde the eyriſhe beſtis
Cloudis, myſtis, and tempiſtis,
Snowis, hailis, rainis, and windes,
And the engendringe in ther kindes,
Al the way thoroughe whiche I came;
O God! (quod I) that made Adame,
Moche is thy myght and noblenes!
And tho thought I upon Boece,
That writeth a thought may flye ſo hie
With fethirs of philoſophie
To paſſin everyche element;
And when he hath ſo farre ywent
Than may ben ſene behinde his backe
Cloude, erthe, and al that I of ſpake.
Tho gan I wexin in a were,
And ſaid, I wote wel I am here,

But whether in body or in goſt
I n'ot ywis, but God thou woſt,
For a more clere entendément
N'as to me nevir yet yſent.
And than thought I on Marcian,
And eke of Anticlaudian,
That ſothe was ther diſcripcion
Of al the hevin's region,
As farre as that I ſawe the preve;
And therfore I can 'hem beleve.
With that the egle gan to crie,
Let be (quod he) thy fantaſie:
Wylte thou lernin of ſterris ought?
Nay, certainly, (quod I) right nought.
And why? (quod he.) For I am olde.
Or ellis wolde I the have tolde
(Quod he) the ſtarris namis, lo!
And al the hevin's ſignis to,
And whiche they be. No force (quod I.)
Yes perde, (quod he;) woſt thou why?
For whan thou rediſt poëtry,
Howe the goddis can ſtellify
A birde, a ſyſhe, or him or her,
As of birdes the ravyn and other,
Or Ariones harpe ſyne,
Or Caſtor Pollux, or Delphine,
Or Atlante's doughtirs ſeven,
How al theſe are yſet in heven,
For though thou have 'hem ofte in hande
Yet n'oſt thou nat where that they ſtande.
No force, (quod I;) it is no nede:
As wel I leve, ſo God me ſpede,
'Hem that writin of this matere
As though I knewe ther placis here,
And eke they ſemin here ſo bright
That it ſhulde ſhendin al my ſight
To loke on 'hem. That may wel be,
(Quod he;) and ſo forth bare he me
A while, and tho began to crie,
That nevir herde I thinge ſo hie;
Holde up thine hed, for al is wel
Sainte Julian, lo! bonne hoſtel!
Se here The Houſe of Fame, lo!
Mayiſt thou not here that I do?
Here what? (quod I.) The gretè ſowne
(Quod he) that romblith up and downe
In Fam'is Houſe, ful of tidinges
Bothe of faire ſpeche and of chidinges,
And of falſe and ſothe compownid;
Herkin wel, it is not rownid.
Heriſt thou not the gretè ſwough?
Yes, perde, (quod I) well ynough.
And what ſowne is it lyke? (quod he.)
Peter! lyke the' beting of the ſe
(Quod I) againſt the rochis halowe,
Whan tempeſtes done ther ſhippis ſwalow,
And that a man ſtande out of doute
A myle off them and here it route;
Or ellis lyke to the humblinge
Aftir the clappe of a thundringe,
Whan Jovis hath the eyre ybete,
But it doth me for fere to ſwete.
Nay, drede the not therof, (quod he)
It 'is nothing that will bytin the;
Thou ſhalte have no harme truily.
And with that worde both he and I
As nighe the place arrivid were
As men might caſtin with a ſpere:
I ne wiſt howe, but in a ſtrete
He ſet me faire upon my fete,
And ſayid, Walkith forth a pace,
And tel thine advinture and caſe
That thou ſhalte finde in Fam'is place.
Nowe (quod I) while that we have ſpace
To ſpeke, or that I go fro the,
For the love of God tellith me
In ſothe that I will of the lere,
If this ilke noiſe which that I here
Be as I have herde the me tell,
Of folke that done in erthe ydwell,
And comith here in the ſame wiſe
As I the herde or this deviſe,
And that here liv'is body n'is
In all that Houſe that yondir is
That makith al this loud fare.
No, (anſwerid he) by Sainte Clare,
And al ſo wiſſely God rede me:
But o thinge I will warne the,
Of the whiche thou wilte have wondir.
Lo! to The Houſe of Fame yondir.
Thou woſte howe comith every ſpeche,
It nedith not the efte to teche;
But underſtande now right wel this,
Whan any ſpeche ycomin is
Up to the palais, anone right
It wexith like the ſame wight
Whiche that the worde in erth yſpake,
Be he clothid in red or blake,
And hath ſo very his likeneſſe
That ſpake the worde, that thou wilte geſſe
That it the ſame body be,
Wher man or woman, he or ſhe.
And is not this a wondir thinge?
Yes, (quod I) tho by hevin kinge:
And with this worde Farewel, (quod he)
And here wil I abydin the,
And God of hevin ſende the grace
Some gode to lernin in this place!
And I of him toke leve anone,
And gan forth to the palays gone.

THE THIRD BOKE.

Thow, god of Sciènce and of Light,
Apollo! thorough thy grete might
This litil laſt boke now thou gye,
Nowe that I will for maiſtèrie
Here arte potenciall be ſhewde,
But for the rime is lyght and lewdè
Yet make it ſomwhat agreable,
Though ſome verſe faile in a ſyllable,
And that I do no diligence
To ſhewin craftè but ſentence;
And if that divine virtue thou
Wilte helpin me to ſhewin nowe
That in my hed ymarkid is,
Lo! that is for to menin this,
The Houſe of Fame for to diſcrive,
Thou ſhalt yſe me go as blive
Unto the next laurir I ſe,
And kyſſe it for it is thy tre:
Nowe entre in my breſt anone.
Whan I was from the egle gone,
I gan beholde upon this place,
And certaine or I furthir paſſe
I wol you al the ſhape deviſe
Of Houſe and cite, and al the wiſe
Howe I gan to this place approche,
That ſtode upon ſo hie a roche,
Hyir yſtandith none in Spaine;
But up I clambe with mochil paine,
And though to clime ygrevid me
Yet I ententife was to ſe,
And for to porin wondre lowe,
If I coude any wiſe yknowe
What manir ſtone this roche ywas;
For it was lyke a limid glas,
But that it ſhone ful morè clere,
But of what congelid matere
It was I ne wiſte redily;
But at the laſte eſpyid I,
And founde that it was everydele
A roche of yſe and not of ſtele:
Thought I, by Saint Thomas of Kent
This were a feble foundèment
To buildin on a place ſo hie;
He ought hym lite to glorifie
That heron builte, God ſo me ſave.
Tho ſawe I al the hall igrave
With famous folkis namis fele
That haddin ben in mochil wele,
And ther famis full wide iblowe,
But well unnethis might I knowe
Any lettiris for to rede
Ther namis by, for out of drede
Thei werin almoſte of thawed ſo
That of the lettirs one or two
Were molte awaie of every name,
So unfamous was wexe ther fame;
But men ſaie, *What maie evir laſt?*
Tho gan I in myne hertè caſt
That thei were molte awaie for hete,
And not awaie with ſtormis bete,
For on that othir ſide I ſey
Of this hill, that northward yley,
How it was writin full of names
Of folke that had afore grete fames
Of oldè tyme, and yet thei were
As freſhe as men had written 'hem there
The ſelf daie, or that verry houre,
That I on 'hem began to poure;
But well I wiſtè what it made,
It was conſervid with the ſhade,
All the writyng which that I ſie,
Of a caſtill that ſtode on hie,
And ſtode eke in ſo cold a place
That hete ne might it not deface.
Tho gan I on this hill to gone,
And found upon the coppe a wone,
That all the men that ben on live
Ne han the connyng to diſcrive
The beaute of that ilkè place,
Ne coudin caſtin no compace

Soche an othir for to ymake
That might of beautie be his make,
Ne one ſo wondirly iwrought,
That it aſtonieth yet my thought,
And makith all my witte to ſwinke,
Upon this caſtill for to thinke,
So that the wondir grete beautie,
Caſte, craft, and curioſitie,
Ne can I not to you deviſe,
My witte ne maie me not ſuffiſe,
But natheleſſe all the ſubſtaunce
I have yet in my remembraunce;
For why? me thoughtin, by Sainct Gile,
That all was ſtone of berile
Bothe the caſtill and the toure,
And eke the hall and every boure,
Withoutin pecis or joynynges,
But many ſubtill compaſſynges,
As barbicans and pinnacles,
Imageries and tabernacles,
I ſawe, and full eke of windowes,
As flakis fallin in grete ſnowes,
And eke in eche of the pinacles
Ywerin ſondrie habitacles,
In whiche ſtodin all withoutin
Full the caſtill all aboutin
Of all manir of minſtralis
And jeſtours, that tellin talis
Bothe of wepyng and eke of game,
And all that longith unto Fame:
There herde I playing on an harpe,
That ſounid bothe well and ſharpe,
Hym Orpheus full craftily,
And on this othir ſide faſt by
Ysatte the harpir Orion,
And Gacides Chirion,
And othir harpirs many one,
And the Briton Glaſkirion,
And ſmale harpirs with ther glees
Satte undir 'hem in divers ſees,
And gone on 'hem upwarde to gape,
And counterfaited 'hem as an ape,
Or as Craſte counterfeitith Kinde.
Tho ſawe I ſtandin 'hem behinde,
Afarre from 'hem, al by 'hem ſelve,
Many a thouſande tymis twelve,
That madin loude minſtralſies
In cornmuſe and eke in ſhalmies,
And in many an othir pipe,
That craftily began to pipe
Bothe in doucid and eke in rede,
That ben at feſtis with the brede,
And many' a floite and litlyng horne,
And pipis made of grene corne,
As have theſe little herd gromes
That kepin beſtis in the bromes.
There ſawe I then Dan Citherus,
And of Athenes Dan Proſerus,
And Mercia, that loſte her ſkinne
Bothe in the face, bodie, and chinne,
For that ſhe would envyin, lo!
To pipin bette than Apollo.
There ſawe I famous old and yong
Pipiris of all the Duche tong,
To lernin love dauncis ſpringis,
Reyis, and the ſtraung thingis.
Tho ſawe I in an othir place,
Yſtandyng in a large ſpace,
Of 'hem that makin blodie ſoun
In trumpe, beme, and clarioun,
For in fight and in blodeſhed, nges
Is uſid glad clarionynges.
There herde I trumpin Meſſenus,
Of whom that ſpekith Virgilius.
There herd I Joab trumpe alſo,
Theodomas, and othir mo,
And all that uſid clarion
In Caſteloigne and Aragon,
That in ther tymis famous were,
To lernin ſawe I trumpin there.
There ſawe I ſit in othir ſees,
Playing on othir ſondrie glees,
Whiche that I can not now nevin,
Mo then ſterris ben in hevin,
Of whiche I n'ill as now not rime
For eſe of you and loſſe of time,
For *Tyme iloſt*, this knowin ye,
By no waie maie recovered be.
There ſawe I playing jogelours,
Megiciens and tragetours,
And Phetoniſſis, charmereſſis,
And olde witchis and ſorcereſſis,
That uſen exorciſacions
And eke ſubfumigacions,
And clerkis eke which connin well
All this magike hight Naturell,
That craftily doe ther ententes
To maken in certain aſcendentes
Imagis, lo! through whiche magike
To maken a man ben whole or ſike.
There ſawe I the Quene Medea,
And Circe and Caliophia.
There ſawe I Hermes Ballenus,
Limote, and eke Symon Magus.
There ſawe I, and yknewe by name,
That by ſoche arte doen men have fame.
There ſawe I eke Coll Tragetour
Upon a table' of ſicamour
Playin an uncouth thyng to tell;
I ſawe hym cary a windemell
Undir a walnote ſhale.
What ſhould I makin lengir tale?
Of all the peple that I ſey
I could not tell till dom'iſdey.
When I had all this folke beholde,
And founde me loce and not yholde,
And I amuſid a longe while
Upon this wall all of berile,
That ſhone lightir than any glas,
And made well more then it ywas,
As it kindely thing of Fame is,
And then right anone aftir this
I gan forthe romin till I fonde
The caſtill yate on my right honde,
Whiche all ſo well ycorvin was
That nevir ſothe an othir n'as,
And yet it was by avinture
Iwrought by grete and ſubtill cure;

It nedith not you more to tellen,
To makin you to long to dwellen,
Of theſe ilke yatis flouriſhynges,
Ne of compacis ne karvynges,
Ne the hackyng in maſonries,
As corbettis and imageries.
But Lorde, ſo faire it was to ſhewe!
For it was all with golde behewe;
But in I went, and that anone:
There met I crying many one,
A larges, larges! holde up well;
God ſave the ladie of this pell,
Our ownè gentill Ladie Fame,
And 'hem that wjllen to have a name
Of us! Thus heard I cryin all,
And faſt comin out of the hall
And ſhoke noblis and ſtarlyngis,
And corounid were as kyngis
With crownis wrought full of loſynges,
And many ribans many fringes
Were on ther clothis truily.
Tho at the laſt eſpyid I
That purſevauntes and heraudis,
That cryin riche folkis laudis,
It werin all; and every man
Of 'hem, as I you tellin can,
Had on him throwin a veſture
Whiche men yclepe a cote armure,
Embroudirid wondirly riche,
As though thei werin not iliche:
But nought will I, ſo mote I thrive,
Be now aboutin to diſcrive
All theſe armis that there yweren
That thei thus on ther cotis weren,
For to me were impoſſible,
Men might make of 'hem a Bible
Full twentie fote thicke as I trowe,
For certain who ſo coud it knowe
Ymight there all the armis ſene
Of famous folke that er had bene
In Affrike, Europe, and Aſie,
Sithins firſt began chivalrie.
Lo! how ſhould I now tell all this!
Ne of the hall eke what nede is
To tellin you? that every wall
Of it, and roſe, and flore withall,
Was platid halfe a fotè thicke
Of golde, and that ne was not wicke,
But for to provin in all wiſe
As fine as ducket in Veniſe,
Of whiche to lite all in my pouche is;
And thei were ſet as thicke of ouchis
Fine, of the finiſt ſtonis faire
That men reden in the lapidaire,
Or as graſſis growen in a mede;
But it were all to long to rede
The namis, and therefore I pace.
But in this luſtie and riche place,
That Fam'is Hall ycallid was,
Full mochil pres of folke there n'as,
Ne crouding, for to mochil pres;
But all on hie above a des
Satte in a ſe imperiall
That made was of rubie roiall

Whiche that a carbuncle is called,
I ſawe perpetually iſtalled
A femine creture,
That nevir formid by Nature
Was ſoche an othir thyng I faie;
For althirfirſte, the ſothe to ſaie;
Me thoughtin that ſhe was ſo lite
That the ſmale length of a cubite
Was lengir than ſhe ſemid be,
But thus ſone in a whilè ſhe
Her ſelf tho' wondirly yſtreight
That with her fete ſhe th' erthe yreight,
And with her hedde ſhe touchid heven,
There as ſhinith the ſterris ſeven;
And thereto yet, as to my wit,
I ſawin a grete wondir yit,
Upon her eyin to beholde,
But certainly' I 'hem nevir tolde,
For as fele eyin haddin ſhe
As ſethirs upon ſoulis be,
Or werin on the beſtis foure
That Godd'is trone can to hònoure,
As writeth ſhon in the' Apocalyps,
Her here, that was owndie and crips,
As burnid golde it ſhone to ſe.
And, ſothe to tellin alſo, ſhe
Had alſo fele upſtandyng eres,
And tongis as on beſt ben heres,
And on her fete woxin ſawe I
Partrich'is wingis redily.
But Lorde! the perrie' and the richeſſe
I ſawe ſittyng on the goddeſſe,
And the hevinly melodie
Of ſongis full of armonie
I herde about her trone iſong,
That all the palais wall yrong!
So ſonge the mightie Muſè, ſhe
That clepid is Caliope,
And her ſevin ſuſtirin eke,
That in ther facis ſemid meke,
And evirmore eternally
Thei ſongin of Fame; tho heard I,
Yheried be thou and thy name,
Goddeſſe of Renoun and of Fame!
Tho was I aware at the laſt,
As I myne eyin gan upcaſt,
That this ilke grete and noble quene
Upon her ſhuldirs gan ſuſtene
Bothè the armis and the name
Of tho that haddin largè fame,
Aliſander and Hercules,
That with a ſherte his life did leſe;
And thus founde I ſittyng this goddeſſe
In noble honour and richeſſe,
Of which I ſtinte a whilè now,
Of othir thing to tellin you.
Tho ſawe I ſtande on th' other ſide,
Streight doune unto the doris wide,
From the dees many a pillere
Of metall that ſhone not full clere,
But though thei were of no richeſſe
Yet were thei made for grete nobleſſe,
And in 'hem was there grete ſentence,
And ſoike of hie and digne reverence,

Of which to tellin will I fonde.
Upon a pillir ſawe I ſtonde,
Alderfirſt there yſie,
Upon a pillir ſtonde on hie,
That was of lede and iron fine,
Hym of the ſectè Saturnine,
The Ebraike Joſephus the old,
That of the Jewis geſtis told,
And he bare on his ſhuldirs hie
All the fame up of the Jurie;
And by hym ſtodin othir ſeven,
Full wiſe and worthie for to neven,
To helpe hym berin up the charge,
It was ſo hevie and ſo large;
And for thei writtin of battailes
As well as of othir marvailes,
Therefore ywas, lo! this pillere,
Of the whiche I you tellin here,
Of lede and iron bothe iwis,
For iron Mart'is metall is,
Whiche that the god is of Battaile,
And eke the lede withoutin faile
Is, lo! the metall of Saturne,
That hath ful largè whele to turne,
To ſtandin forthe on eithir rowe
Of 'hem whiche that I could yknowe,
Though I by ordir 'hem not tell,
To makin you to long to dwell.
Theſe, of the whiche I gan to rede,
Theſe ſawe I ſtandin out of drede
Upon an iron pillir ſtrong,
That painted was all endelong
With tigr'is blode in every place,
The Tholaſon, with that height Stace,
That bare of Thebis up the name
Upon his ſholdirs, and the fame
Alſo of cruill Achilles;
And by hym ſtode withoutin leſe
Full wondir hie on a piller
Of iron he the grete Omer,
And with him Dares and Titus
Before, and eke he Lollius,
And Guide eke de Columpnis,
And Engliſh Gafride eke iwis;
And eche of theſe, as I have joye,
Was buſie for to bere up Troye,
So hevie thereof was the fame,
That for to bere it was no game;
But yet I gan full well eſpie
Betwene 'hem was a little' envie;
One ſaied that Omer madè lies
And feinyng in his poëtries,
And was to the Grekes favourable,
And therefore helde he it but fable.
Tho ſawe I ſtande on a pillere
That was of tinnid iron clere,
Him the Latine poete Virgile,
That hath bore up a longè while
The fame of pius Æneas.
And next him on a pillir was
Of coppir Venus clerke Ovide,
That hoth yſowin wondirs wide
The gretè god of Lov'is fame,
And there he bare up well his name
Upon this piller al ſo hie,
As might ſe it with myne eye;
For why? this hall whereof I rede
Was woxe on height, and length, and brede
Well morè by a thouſande dele
Than it was erſt, that ſawe I wele.
Tho ſawe I on a pillir by
Of iron, wrought full ſternily,
The grete poete, him Dan Lucan,
That on his ſhouldirs bare up than,
As hie as that I might it ſe,
The fame of Julius and Pompe,
And by hym ſtodin all theſe clerkes
That write of Rom'is mightie werkes,
That if I would ther namis tell
Tho all to long ymuſt I dwell.
And nexte hym on a pillir ſtode
Of ſulphure, liche as he were wode,
Dan Claudian, ſothe for to tell,
That bare up all the fame of hell,
Of Pluto and of Proſerpine,
That quene is of the derkè pine.
What ſhould I more tellin of this?
The hall ywas all full iwis
Of 'hem that writtin oldè jeſtes
As ben on treis rokis neſtes,
But it a full confuſe mattere
Were all theſe jeſtis for to here
That thei of write, and how thei height:
But while that I beheld this ſight
I herde a noiſe approchin blive,
That fareth as bees doen in an hive
Ayenſt ther tyme of out flying,
Right ſoche a manir murmurynge
For all the worlde it ſemid me.
Tho gan I loke about, and ſe
That there come entryng into the' hall
A right grete companie withall,
And that of ſondrie regions,
Of all kind of condicions
That dwell in yerthe undir the mone,
Bothe pore and riche: and alſo ſone
As thei were come into the hall
Thei gan on kneis doune to fall
Before this ilkè noble quene,
And ſayid, Graunt us, ladie ſhene!
Eche of us of thy grace a bone.
And ſome of 'hem ſhe grauntid ſone,
And ſome ſhe warnid well and faire,
And ſome ſhe grauntid the contrarie
Of ther aſkyng all uttirlie;
But this I ſaie you truilie,
What that her grace was I ne wiſt,
For of theſe folke full well I wiſt
Thei haddin gode fame eche deſerved,
Although thei were diverſly ſerved,
Right as her ſiſtir Dame Fortune
Is wont to ſervin in commune.
Now herkin how ſhe gan to paie
'Hem that gan her of grace to praie,
And yet, lo! all this companie
Yſaidin ſothe, and not a lie.
Madame, (thus ſayid thei) we be
Folke whiche that here beſechin the

That thou grauntin as now gode Fame,
And let our workis have gode name;
In full recompenſacion
Of gode werke give us gode renoun.
I warne it you (quod ſhe anone)
Ye gettin of me gode Fame none
By God, and therefore go your waie.
Alas, (quod thei) and welawaie!
Tellith us what your cauſe maie be.
For that me liſte it not, (quod ſhe,)
No wight ſhall ſpeke of you iwis
Ne gode ne harme ne that ne this.
And with that worde ſhe gan to call
Her meſſengir that was in hall,
And bad that he ſhould faſt ygone,
Upon pain to be blinde anone,
For Æolus, the god of Winde,
In Thrace there ye ſhall hym yfinde,
And bid hym bryng his clarioun
That is full divers of his ſoun,
And it is clepid Clerè Laude.
With which he wont is to heraude
'Hem that that me liſt ipraiſid be;
And alſo bid hym now that he
Bryng eke his othir clarioun,
That hight Sclaundir in every toune,
With whiche he wont is to diffame
'Hem that me liſt and doe 'hem ſhame.
This meſſengir gan faſt to gone,
And founde where in a cave of ſtone,
In a countre which that hight Thrace,
This Æolus with hardè grace
Yhelde the windis in diſtreſſe,
And gan 'hem undir hym to preſſe,
That thei gone as the beris rore,
He bounde and preſſid 'hem ſo ſore.
This meſſengir gan faſt to crie,
Riſe up (quod he) and faſt the hie
Untill thou at my ladie be,
And take thy clarions eke with the,
And ſpede the faſt: and he anone
Toke to him one that hight Tritone,
His clarions to berin tho,
And let a certain winde ygo,
That blewe ſo hidouſly and hie
That it ne leſtè not a ſkie
In all the welkin long and brode.
This Æolus no where abode
Till he was come to Fam'is fete,
And eke the man that Triton hete,
And there he ſtode as ſtill as ſtone:
And here withall there came anone
An othir hugè companie
Of gode folke, and began to crie
Ladie! grauntith us now gode Fame,
And let our workis have that name,
Now in honour of gentilneſſe,
And al ſo God your ſoule ybleſſe,
For we han well deſervid it,
Therefore is right that we be quit.
As thrive I (quod ſhe) ye ſhall faile,
Gode workis ſhall you not availe
To have of me gode Fame as now;
But wote ye what? I grauntin yowe
That ye ſhall havin a ſhrewde name,
And wickid loos worſè Fame,
Though ye gode loos have well deſerved;
Now goeth your waie, for ye ben ſerved.
And thou Dan Æolus, (quod ſhe)
Take forthe thy trompe anone, let ſe,
That is iclepid Sclaundir light,
And blowe ther loos, that every wight
Speke of 'hem harme and ſhrewdineſſe
In ſtede of gode and worthineſſe,
For thou ſhalt trumpe all the contraire
Of that thei have doen well and faire.
Alas! thought I, what avintures
Yhavin theſe forie cretures,
That thei emongis al the pres
Should thus be ſhamid giltiles!
But what? it muſt nedis ybe.
What did this Æolus? but he
Toke out his blackè trompe of braſſ,
That foulir then the devill was.
And gan this trompè for to blowe
As all the worlde ſhould ovirthrowe:
Throughout evèry regioun
Ywent this foulè trump'is ſoun
As ſwift as pellit out of gonne
When fire is in the poudir ronne,
And ſoche a ſmokè gan out wende
Out of the foulè trump'is ende,
Blacke, blue, and greniſhe, ſwartiſhe, redd
As doith where that man melte lede,
Lo! all on hie from the tewell;
And therto one thyng ſawe I well,
That ay the ferthir that it ranne
The gretir wexin it beganne,
As doeth the rivir from a well,
And it ſtanke as the pitte of hell:
Alas! thus was ther ſhame irong,
And giltleſſe, on evèry tong,
Tho came the thirdè companie,
And gone up to the dees to hie,
And doune on knees thei fell anone,
And ſaidin, We ben everichone
Folke that yhan full truilie
Deſervid Famè rightfullie,
And prayin you it might be knowe
Right as it is, and forthe yblowe.
I graunte (quod ſhe), for now me liſt
That your gode workis ſhall be wiſt,
And yet ye ſhall have bettir loos,
Right in diſpite of all your foos,
Then worthie is, and that anone.
Let now (quod ſhe) thy trumpè gone,
Thou Æolus, that is ſo blacke,
And out thyne othir trumpè take
That hightin Laude, and blowe it ſo
That through the worlde ther Fame may go
All eſily and not to faſt,
That it be knowin at the laſt.
Ful gladly, ladie myne! he ſaied;
And out his trumpe of golde he braied
Anone, and ſet it to his mouthe,
And blewe it eſt, and weſt, and ſouthe,
And northe, as loude as any thonder,
That every wight hath of it wonder,

So brode it ran or that it ſtent;
And certis all the breth that went
Out of his trump'is mouthe yſmelde
As men a potte full of baume helde
Emong a baſkit full of roſes;
This ſavour did he to ther loſes.
And right with this I gan eſpie
There came the fowirth companie,
But certaine thei were wondir fewe,
And gonne to ſtandin on a rewe,
And ſaidin, Certis, ladie bright!
We have doen well with all our might;
But we ne kepe to havin Fame;
Hidith our workis and our name
For Godd'is love, for certis we
Have ſurely doen it for bounte,
And for no manir othir thyng.
I grauntin you all your aſkyng,
(Quod ſhe;) let your workis be dedde.
With that about I tourned my hedde,
And ſawe anone the fivith rout,
That to this ladie gan to lout,
And doune on knees anone to fall,
And to her tho beſoughtin all
To hidin ther gode workis eke,
And ſayid, thei yeve not a leke
For no Fame, ne no ſoche renoun,
For thei for contemplacioun
And Godd'is love had it ywrought;
Ne of Fame wouldin thei have nought.
What! (quod ſhe) and be ye ſo wode?
And wenin ye for to doe gode,
And for to have of that no Fame?
Have ye diſpite to have my name?
Naie, ye ſhall lyin everichone.
Blowith thy trumpe, and that anone;
(Quod ſhe) thou Æolus, I hote,
And ring theſe folkis workes by note,
That all the worlde maie of it here:
And he gan blowe ther loos ſo clere
Within his goldin clariqun,
That through the worlde ywent the ſoun
Al ſo kindely and eke ſo ſoſe
That ther Fame was yblowe aloſt.
And tho came the ſixt companie,
And gonin faſt to Fame to crie
Right verily in this manere;
Thei ſaidin, Mercie, ladie dere!
To tellin certain as it is
We have doen neithir that ne this,
But idill all our life hath be;
But nathèleſſe yet prayin we
That we maie have as gode a Fame,
And grete renome and knowin name,
As thei that have doe noble jeſtes,
And have achevid all ther queſtes,
As wel of love as othir thyng,
All was us nevir broche ne ryng,
Ne ellis what fro women ſent,
Ne onis in ther herte iment,
To maken us onely frendly chere,
But mought ytemin us on bere,
Yet let us to the peple ſeme
Soche as the worlde maie of us deme
That women lovin us for wode,
It ſhall do us as mochil gode,
And to our herte as moche availe
The countirpeiſe, eſe, and travaile,
As we had wonnin with labour,
For that is dere ybought honour,
At the regard of our grete eſe;
And yet ye muſt us more yplefe,
Let us beholdin eke thereto
Worthie, and wiſe, and gode alſo,
And riche, and happie unto love,
For Godd'is love that ſitteth above;
Though we may not the bodie have
Of women, yet, ſo God me ſave,
Let men yglewe on us the name;
Suffiſith that we have the Fame.
I graunt it (quod ſhe), by my trouth.
Now, Æolus, withoutin ſlouth
Take out thy trumpe of golde, (quod ſhe)
And blowe as thei have aſkid me,
That every man wene 'hem at eſe
Although thei go in full badde leſſe.
This Æolus gan it for blowe
That through the worlde it was iknowe.
Tho came the ſeventh route anone,
And fill on kneis everichone,
And ſayid, Ladie, graunte us ſone
The ſame thyng, the ſame bone,
Which that this nexte folke you have done.
Fie on you (quod ſhe) everichone!
Ye naſtie ſwine, ye idle wretches,
Fullfillid of rottin ſlowe tetches!
What! falſe thevis, where ye wolde
Ben famid gode, and nothyng n'olde
Deſervin why, ne nevir thought,
Men rathir you to hangin ought,
For ye be like the ſlepie cat,
That would have fiſhe, but woſt thou what?
He woll nothyng wete his chwis:
Evill thrifte come to your jawis,
And on myne, if I you it graunte,
Or doe favour you to avaunte.
Thou Æolus, thou Kyng of Thrace,
Go blowe this folke a ſorie grace
(Quod ſhe) anone; and woſt thou how?
As I ſhall tellin the right nowe;
Say theſe ben they that wolde honour
Have, and do no kinde of labour,
Ne do no gode, and yet have laude,
And that men wende that belle I ſaude
Ne coude 'hem not of love werne,
And yet ſhe that ygrint at querne
Is all to gode to eſe ther herte.
This Æolus anone up ſterte,
And with his blacke clarioun
He gan to blaſin out a ſoun
As loud as bellith winde in hel,
And eke therewith, the ſothe to tel,
This ſownè was ſo full of japes
As evir mowis were in apes,
And that went al the worlde aboute,
That every wight gan on 'hem ſhoute
And for to laugh as they were wode,
Soche game yfounde they in ther hode.

Tho came anothir companye
That had ydone the trechèry,
The harme and the grete wickednesse,
That any herte coudin ygesse,
And prayid her to have gode Fame,
And that she n'olde do 'hem no shame,
But give 'hem loos and gode renoun,
And do it blowe in clarioun.
Nay, wis, (quod she) it were a vyce;
Al be there in me no justice
Me lyst not for to do it nowe,
Ne this I ne will graunt it you.
Tho came there lepinge in a route,
And gan to clappin al aboute
Every man upon the crowne,
That al the hal began to sowne,
And sayid, Lady lese and dere!
We ben soche folkes, as ye may here,
To tellin all the tale aright,
We ben shrewis every wight,
And have delite in wickidnesse,
As gode folke havin in godenesse,
And joye to ben yknowin shrewes,
And ful of vice and wickid thewes,
Wherfore we praye you on a rowe
That our Fame be soche yknowe
In al thingis right as it is.
I graunte it you, (quod she) ywis;
But what arte thou that saiest this tale,
That werist on thy hose a pale,
And on thy tippet soche a bel?
Madame, (quod he) the sothe to tel,
I am that ilke shrewe ywis
That brent the temple' of Isidis
In Athenis, lo! that cyte.
And wherefore diddest thou so? (quod she.)
By my trouthe, (answerid he) Madame,
I wolde saine have had a name,
As othir folke had in the towne;
Although they were of grete renowne
For ther vertue and ther thewis,
Thought I, as grete Fame have shrewis
(Though it be nought) for shrewdenesse
As gode folke havin for godenesse,
And sithen I may not have that one
That othir n'yl I not forgone,
As for to gettin a Fame here,
The temple set I al on fire.
Nowe done our loos be blowin swithe,
As wisly be thou evir blythe.
Gladly (quod she.), Thou Æolus,
Herist thou not what they prayen us?
Madame, I here ful wel, (quod he)
And I will trumpin it parde;
And toke his blacke trumpe faste,
And gan to puffin and to blaste
Tyl it was at the world'is ende.
With that I gan aboutin wende,
For one that stode right at my bake
Me thought ful godely to me spake,
And sayid, Frende, what is thy name?
Arte thou come hidir to have Fame?
Have Fame! nay, for sothe, frende, (quod I)
I come nat hithir, grant mercy!
For no soche cause, by my hed,
Suffisith me as I were ded
That no wight have my name in honde;
I wot my selfe best howe I stonde,
For what I drie or what I thinke
I wol my selfin al it drinke,
Certainly for the more parte,
As ferforth as I can mine arte.
What doist thou here than? (quod he.)
(Quod I) That wol I tellin the:
The cause why I standin here
Is some newe tidinges for to lere,
Some newè thing, I ne wot what,
Tydingis eythir this or that,
Of love, or of soche thingis glade,
For certainly he that me made
To comin hidir said to me
I shuldin bothe yhere and se
In this place many wondir thinges,
But these ne be no soche tidinges
As I yment of. No? (quod he.)
And I answerid, No, parde,
For ful wel I wote evir yet,
Sithinis that firste I had wit,
That some folke han desirid Fame
Diversly, and loos and gode name,
But certainly I ne wist how
Ne where that Fame dwellid or nowe,
Ne eke of her discripcion,
No also her condicion,
Ne eke the ordir of her dome
Knewe I not till I hithir come.
Why than be, lo! these tidingis
Which that thou nowe hethir bringis,
That thou hast herde? (quod he to me:)
But nowe no force, for wel I se
What thou desirist for to lere:
Come forthe, and stande no lengir here,
And I wol the, withoutin drede,
In to soche anothir place lede
There thou shalte herin many one.
Tho gan I forthe with him to gone
Out of the castil, sothe to sey.
Tho sawe I stande in a valey,
Undir the castil faste by,
An house that *Domus Dædali*,
That *Labyrinthus*, ycleped is,
N'as made so wondirly ywis,
Ne halfe so quently was ywrought;
And evirmo as swifte as thought
This queint House aboutin ywent,
That nevirmo it stille ystent,
And there came out so gret a noise,
That had it stondin upon Oyse
Men might have herde it esily
To Rome, I trowin sikirly;
And the noise whiche that I yherde
For al the worlde right so it serde
As dothe the routinge of the stone
That fro th' engin is letyn gone.
And al this House of whiche I rede
Was made of twyggis falowe, rede,
And grene eke, and some werin white,
Soche as men to the cagis twhite,

Or makin of these paniers,
Or ellis hutchis or dossers,
That for the swough and for the twigges
This House was al so full of gigges,
And al so ful eke of chirkinges,
And of many othir wirkinges,
And eke this House hath of entrees
As many' as levis ben on trees
In sommir whan that they ben grene,
And on the rose yet men may sene
A thousande bolis, and well mo,
To lettin the sowne out ygo;
And by day in every tyde
Ben al the doris opin wide,
And by night eche one is unshette;
Ne portir is there none to lette
No manir tydinges in to pace,
Ne nevir rest is in that place,
That it n'is filled full of tidinges,
Eythir loude or of whisperinges,
And evir all the Housis angles
Is full of rowninges and of jangles,
Of werres, of pece, of mariages,
Of restes, of labour, of viages,
Of abode, of dethe, and of lyfe,
Of love, of hate, accorde, of strife,
Of losse, of lore, and of winninges,
Of hele, of sickenesse, or lesinges,
Of faire wethir and tempestis,
Of qualme, of folke and of bestis,
Of divers transmutacions
Of estates and of regions,
Of trust, of drede, of jalousy,
Of witte, of winning, of foly,
Of plenty and of grete famine,
Of chepe, of derthe, and of ruine,
Of gode or of misgovernement,
Of fyre, and divers accident.
And lo! this House of whiche I write
Sykir be ye it n'as no lite,
For it was fyxtie mile of length;
Al was the tymbir of no strength,
Yet it is foundid to endure
While that it lyste to Aventure,
That is the mothir of Tidinges,
As the se of wellis and springes,
And it was shapin lyke a cage.
Certis, (quod I) in al mine age
Ne sawe I sochean Hous as this.
And as I wondrid me ywis
Upon this House, tho ware was I
How that myne egle fastè by
Was perchid hye upon a stone,
And I gan streight to him to gone,
And sayid him thus, I pray the
That thou a while abidin me
For Godd'is love, and let me sene
What wondirs in that place ybene,
For yet parauntir I may lere
Some gode therin, or somwhat here,
That lese me were or that I went.
Peter, that is nowe myne entent,
(Quod he to me) therfore I dwel;
But certaine one thinge I the tel,
That but I bringin the therin
Ne shal thou nevir conne the gin
To come in to it out of doute,
So faste it whirlith, lo! aboute;
But sithe that Jov'is of his grace,
As I have said, wil the solace
Finally with these ilkè thinges,
These uncouthe fightis and tidinges,
To passe away thine hevinesse,
Soche routhe hath he of thy distresse
That thou suffredest debonairly,
And woste thy selvin utterly
Wholy desperate of al blisse,
Sithe that Fortune hath made amisse
The sote of al thine hert'is rest
Languishe, and eke in pointe to brest,
But he through his mightie melite
Wil do the ese, al be it lite,
And gave in expresse commaundement,
To whiche I am obedient,
To forthir the with al my myght,
And wisshe and techin the aright
Where thou maiste moste tidingis here,
Thou shalte here many one ylere.
And with this worde he right anone
Yhent me up betwene his tone,
And at a windowe in me brought
That in this House was, as me thought,
And therewithal me thought it stent,
And nothinge it aboutin wente,
And me set in the flore adoun;
But soche grete congregacioun
Of folke as I sawe rome about,
Some it within and some without,
N'as nevir sene, ne shal be este,
That certis in this worlde n'is leste
So many formid by Nature,
Ne ded so many a creture,
That wel unnethis in that place
Had I a fot'is brede of space;
And every wight that I sawe there
Rownid everiche in othir's ere
A newè tidinge privily,
Or els he tolde it opinly,
Right thus, and said, Ne woste nat thou
That is betiddin, lo! right nowe?
No, certis, (quod he;) tel me what;
And than he tolde him this and that,
And swore therto that it was sothe,
Thus hath he said, and thus he dothe,
And this shal be', and thus herde I say,
That shal be founde, and dare I lay;
That al the folke that is on lyve
Ne have the konninge to discrive
Tho thingis that I herdin there,
What aloude and what in the ere;
But al the wondir moste was this,
Whan one had herde a thinge ywis
He came streight to another wight,
And gan him tellin anone right
The same tale that to him was tolde
Or it a forlonge way was olde,
And began somwhat for to eche
Unto this tidinge in his speche

More than evir it ſpokin was,
And nat ſo ſone departid n'as
Tho fro him that he ne ymette
With the thirde man, and er he lette
Any ſtounde he ytolde him alſe;
Werin the tidinges ſothe or falſe
Yet wolde he tel it nathèles,
And evirmore with mo encres
That it was erſt: thus northe and ſouthe
Went every tidinge fro mouth to mouthe,
And that encreſinge evirmo,
As fire is wont to quicken and go,
From a ſparcle ſprongin amis,
Tyl al a cite brent up is.
And whan that that was ful up ſprongе,
And waxin more on every tonge
Than er it was, and went anone
Up to a windowe out to gone,
Or but it might out there ypaſſe
It gan out crepe at ſome crevaſſe,
And flewe forthe faſtè for the nones.
And ſomtyme I ſawe there at ones
A leſinge and a ſadde ſothefawe,
That gonnin of avinture drawe
Out at a windowe for to pace,
And whan thei mettin in that place
They were acheekid bothè two,
And neithir of 'hem myght out go,
For eche othir they gonne ſo croude,
Tyl eche of 'hem gan cryin loude
Let me gone firſt; Nay, but let me,
And here I wol enſurin the
With vowis that thou wolt do ſo,
That I ſhal nevir fro the go,
But be alway thin owne ſworne brother;
We wol meddle us eche in other,
That no man be he ner ſo wrothe
Shal have one of us two, but bothe
At onis, as beſide his leve,
Come we amorowe or on eve,
Be we ycryde or ſtyl yrowned:
Thus ſawe I falſe and ſothe compowned
Togidir flye for o tidinge;
Thus out at holis gonne to wringe
Every tidinge ſtreight to Fame,
And ſhe gan yevin eche his name
Aftir her diſpoſicion,
And yeve 'hem eke duracion,
Some to wexin and wanin ſone,
As dothe the faire and whitè mone,
And let him gonne; there might I ſcin
Wingid wondirs full faſt flyin
Twenty thouſande all in a route,
As Æolus 'hem blewe aboute:
And, Lorde! this Houſe in allè times
Was ful of ſhypmen and pilgrimes,
With ſcrippis bretteful of leſinges,
Entermedilid with tidinges;
And eke alonè by 'hem ſelve
A many thouſande tymis twelve
Sawe I eke of theſe pardoners,
Currours, and eke of meſſaungers,
With boxis crommid ful of lyes
As evir veſſil was with lies:
And as I althirfaſtiſt went
Aboute, and dyd al myne entent
Me for to playen and for to lere,
And eke a tiding for to here,
That I had herde of ſome countre,
That ſhal not nowe be tolde for me,
For it no nede is, redyly
Folke can yſinge it bet than I,
For al mote out or late or rathe
Allè the ſhevis in the fathe.
I herdin a grete noiſe withall
Within a cornir of the hal,
There men of love tydingis tolde,
And I gan thidirwarde beholde,
For I ſawe renninge every wight
As faſte as that they haddin might,
And everyche cride, What thinge is that?
And ſome ſaid, I n'ot nevir what:
And whan they were al on an hepe
Tho thei behinde gonnin up lepe,
And clambin up on othir faſte,
And up the noiſe on hyghis caſte,
And tredin faſt on othir's heles,
And ſtampe, as men done aftir eles:
But at the laſte I ſawe a man
Whiche that I nought diſcrive ne can,
But he yſemid for to be
A man of grete auctorite.
And therewithal I 'anon abraide
Out of my ſlepè halfe afraide,
Remembring wel what I had ſene,
And howe hye and ferre I had bene,
In my goſt, and had grete wonder
Of that the mighty god of Thonder
Had let me knowen, and gan to write
Lyke as ye have herde me endite,
Wherfore to ſtudy' and rede alway
I purpoſe to do day by day.
And thus in dreminge and in game
Endith this litil Boke of Fame.

CERTAINE BALADES, &c.

Here foloweth a godely Balade of Chaucer.

MOTHER of norture, beſt beloved of all,
And freſhè floure, to whom gode thrift God ſende,
Your childe, if it luſte you me ſo to call,
All be' I' unable my ſelf ſo to pretende,
To your diſcrecion I recommende
Mine herte and all, with every circumſtaunce,
All wholly to be' undir your govirnaunce.
Moſte deſire I, and have, and evir ſhall,
Thing which that might your hert'is eſe amende;
Have me excuſed, my powir is but ſmall;
Natheleſſe of right ye ought for to commende
My gode will, whichè fainè would entende
To doe you ſervice, for my ſuffiſaunce
Is wholly to be' undir your govirnaunce.
Mculx'un in herte, whiche nevir ſhall apall,
Aie freſhe and new, and right glad to diſpende
My time in your ſervice, what ſo befall,
Beſeechyng your excellence to defende
My ſimpleneſſe, if ignoraunce offende
In any wiſe, fith that myne affiaunce
Is whollie to be' undir your govirnaunce.
Daiſie of light, very ground of comfort!
The Sunn'is doughtir ye hight, as I rede,
For when he weſtrith farwell your diſport;
By your nature anone right for pure drede
Of the rude Night, that with his boiſtous wede
Of derkeneſſe ſhadowith our hemiſphere,
Then cloſin ye, my liv'is ladie dere!
Daunyng the daie unto his kinde reſort,
And Phœbus your fathir with his ſtremes rede
Adorneth the morowe, conſuming the ſort
Of miſtie cloudes, that wouldin ovirlede
True humble hertis with ther miſtie hede,
Nere comfort adaies, when your eyin clere
Diſcloſe and ſprede, my liv'is ladie dere!
Je voulbray; but the grete God diſpoſeth
And makith cafuell by his providence
Socho thing as mann'is frele wit purpoſeth,
All for the beſt, if that your conſcience
Not grutche it, but in humble pacience
It receve, for God ſaith withoutin a fable
A faithfull herte evir is acceptable.
Cautelis whoſo uſith gladlie gloſeth;
To eſchewe ſoche it is right high prudence;
What ye ſaied onis mine herte oppoſeth,
That my writyng japis in your abſence
Pleſid you moche bettir than my preſence,
Yet can I more, ye be not excuſable;
A faithfull herte evir is acceptable.
Quakith my penne, my ſpirite ſuppoſeth
That in my writing ye find woll offence;
Min hert welknith thus ſone, anon it riſeth,
Now hotte, now colde, and eft in grete fervence;
That miſſe is cauſid of negligence,
And not of malice, therefore beth merciable;
A faithfull herte evir is acceptable.

L'envoye.

Forthe complaint, forthe thou lacking eloquence,
Forthe litil lettir, of enditing lame,
I have beſought my ladie's ſapience
Of thy behalfe for to accept in game
Thine inabilite, doe thou the ſame:
Abide, have more yet; *Je ſerve Joveſſe:*
Now forth, I cloſe the' in holy Venus name,
The ſhall uncloſe my hert'is govirneſſe.

A ballade in commendacion of our Ladie.

A THOUSANDE ſtories coud I mo reherce
Of olde poetis touching this matere,
How that Cupide the hertis gan ſo perce
Of his ſervauntis, ſettyng 'hem in fere.
Lo here the fine of th' errour and the fere,
Lo here of love the guerdone and grevaunce,
That er what wo her ſervauntes do avaunce!
Wherfore now plainly I woll my ſtile dreſſe
Of one to ſpeke at nede that woll not faile;
Alas! for dole I ne can ne maie' expreſſe
Her paſſyng priſe, and that is no mervaile.
O winde of grace! now blowe unto my ſaile,
O auriate licour of Clio! to write
My penne enſpire of that I woll endite.

Alas! unworthie I am and unable
To love ſoche one, all women ſurmountyng,
But ſhe be benigne to me and merciable,
That is of pitie the welle and the ſpryng;
Wherfore of her in laude and in praiſyng,
So as I can, ſupportid by her grace,
Right thus I ſaie, knelyng before her face:
O ſtere of ſterris, with thy ſtremis clere,
Sterre of the ſe, to ſhipmen light and gide!
O luſtie livyng, moſte plefaunt to' appere,
Whoſe bright bemis the cloudis maie not hide!
O waie of life to 'hem that go or ride,
Haven aftir tempeſt, furiſt up to rive,
On me have mercie for thy joyis five!
O rightfull rule! o bote of holineſſe!
And lightſome line of pitie for to plain,
Originall of grace and all godeneſſe,
And cleneſt conduct of vertue moſte ſoverain!
Mothir of mercie', our trouble to reſtrain,
Chambir and cloſit cleneſt of chaſtitie,
And namid herbrough of the deitie!
O cloſit, gardin, voidè of wedis wicke,
Criſtallin welle, of clereneſſe clere conſigned,
Fructified olive of foiles faire and thicke,
And redo'lent cedre moſt dere worthy digned!
Remember on ſinnirs that to the be' affined
Or wickid fendis ther wrathe on 'hem wreche;
Lanterne of light! thou art ther livis leche.
Paradiſe of pleſaunce, gladſome to all gode,
O benigne braunchilet of the pine tre,
Vinarie' envermailed, refreſhir of bode,
Licour ayen langour that palled maie not be,
Blisful blomie bloſme, bidyng in bounte!
Thy mantell of mercie on our miſerie ſprede,
And er we' awaie wrappe us undir thy wede.
O rodie roſier, flouring without ſpine,
Fountain filthleſſe, as birill currant clere!
Sum drop of gracefull dewe to us propine;
Light without nebule ſhinyng in thy ſphere,
Medicine to miſcheves, pucell without pere!
Flambe doun the full light of thin influence,
Remembring thy ſervantes for thy magnificence.
Of all Chriſtin protectrice and tutele,
Retourne of exiled put in the proſcripcion,
To 'hem that erren in the' pathe of ther ſequele,
To wèrie forwandrid tent and pavilion,
To faint and to freſhe the pauſacion,
To unreſtie bothe reſt and remedie,
Fructfull to all tho that in her affie:
To 'hem that rennin thou art itinerarie,
O blisfull bravie to knightes of thy werre!
To werie werkmen ſhe 'is diourne denarie,
Mede unto mariners that have failed ferre,
Laureate corounc ſtremyng as a ſterre,
To 'hem putin palaſtre for thy ſake
Tours of ther conqueſt white as any lake.
O mirthe of martyrs! ſwetir than ſitole,
Of confeſſours alſo riche donatiſe,
Unto virgines eternall lauriole,
*Fore all woman havyng prerogatiſe,
Mothir and maide, bothe widowe and eke wiſe!
Of all the worlde is none but thou alone,
Now ſith thou maie he ſuccour to my mone,

Truſtie turtle, truefaſtiſt of all true,
Curteiſe columbe, replete of all mekeneſſe,
O nightingale with thy notis newe!
O popinjaie! purid with all clenneſſe,
O laveroke of love! ſingyng with ſwetneſſe,
Phœbus waityng till on thy breſt he light,
Undir thy wing at domiſdaie us dight.
O rubie! rubified in the paſſion
Of thy ſonne, us have emongis in minde,
O ſtedfaſt diametre of duracioun!
That ſewe ſeris any time might thou finde.
For none to hym was foundin halfe ſo kinde;
O hardie herte! o lovyng creature!
What was 'it but love that made the ſo endure?
Semely ſaphre, depe loupe, and blewe ewage!
Stable as the loupe ewage of pitie,
This is to ſaie, the freſhiſt of viſage,
Thou loveſt unchaungid 'hem that ſervin the,
And if offence or varying in 'hem be
Thou art aie redie on ther wo to rue,
And 'hem receviſt aye with herte full true.
O godelie gladdid! when that Gabriel
With joy the grette, that maie not be nombrid,
Or halfe the bliſſe who coud ywrite or tell
When the' Holy Ghoſte to the was obumbrid,
Wherthrough ſendes were bittirly encombrid?
O wemleſſe maide! embeliſhed in his birthe,
That man and angill therof haddin mirthe.
Lo here the bloſme and the budde of glorie,
Of whiche the prophet ſo long ſpake beforne!
Lo here the ſame that was in memorie
Of Eſaie, ſo long or ſhe was yborne!
Lo here of David the delicious corne!
Lo here the grounde of life in to bilde,
Becomyng man our ranſome for to yilde!
O glorious voile, vite inviolate!
O firie Titan! perſyng with thy bemes,
Whoſe vertuous brightnes was in breſt vibrat,
That al the world embeliſhed with the lemes,
Conſervatrice of kinges, dukes, and relmes,
Of Jeſſe his ſede the ſwete Sunamite,
Meſure my mourning mine own Margarite!
O ſoverainiſt yſought out of Syon!
Cockle with golde-dewe from above berainid,
Dewe-buſhe unbrent, firèleſſe fire ſet on,
Flambing with fervence, not with hete paimid,
Duryng daiſie that no wethir ſtainid,
Fleece undefouled of gentiliſt Gidion,
And fruictfiyng fairiſt yerde of Aaron!
The mightie arche, the probatiſe piſcine,
Laughyng Aurora, and of peee olive,
Columpne and baſe, up beryng from abime,
Why n'ere I connyng here for to diſcrive?
Choſin of Joſeph, whom he toke to wive,
Unknowyng hym childyng by miracle,
And of our manly figure the tabernacle!
I have none Engliſhe convenient and digne,
Myne herte's hele lady! the with to honour,
Ivorie clene! therefore I woll reſigne
Into thyne hande till that thou liſt ſuccour,
To helpe my makyng both floriſhe and flour,
Then ſhould I ſhewe in love how that I brende,
In ſongis makyng thy name to commende:

For if I coud before thyne excellence
Syngin in love I wouldin what I sele,
And evir standin, ladie', I in thy presence,
To shewe in opin how I love you wele,
And sith although your heart be made of stele
To you withoutin any discev'raunce
J'ay en vous toute ma fiance.
Where might I love evir bettir befet
Then in this lilie likyng to beholde,
That lace of love, the bonde so well thou knit,
That I maie se the or myne hertè colde,
And or I passe out of my dayis olde,
Tofore syngyng evirmore uttirly,
Your eyin two woll ste me sodainly.
For love I langour, blisfed be soch sickneffe!
Sith it 'is for you, my heretely suffisaunce,
I can not ellis saie in my distresse,
So faire one hath myne hert in govirnaunce,
And aftir I begin on esperaunce,
With seble entune, though it thine hert perce,
Yet for thy sake this letter I reherse.
God wote on muskie I can 'not, but I gesse,
Alas why so! that I might saie or syng,
So love I you, my own soverains maistresse,
And evir shall withoutin departyng,
Mirrour of beautie, for you' out should I ring,
In remembraunce eke of your eyin clere,
Thus ferre from you my soverain ladie dere!
So wouldin God your love would me yslo,
Sith for your sake I singin daie by daie;
O hertè! why ne nilt thou breke a two,
Sith with my ladie dwellin I ne maie?
Thus many' a roundell, many a virelaie,
In freshe Englishe, when I me leisir finde,
I doe recorde, on you to havin mynde.
Now, ladie mine! sith I you love and dredc,
And you' unchaunged ever finde in o degre,
Whose grace ne maie slie fro your womanhede,
Disdainith not for to remembre' on me,
Myne hertè bledith for I maie not you se;
And sith ye wotte my menyng desirous
Pleures pour moy s'il vous plaist amoreux.
What marvaile is though I in pain ybe?
I' am departid from you my sovèrain;
Fortune alas! *dont vient la destrète,*
That in no wise I can ne maie attain
To se the beautie of your eyin twain,
Wherefore I saie, for tristesse doeth me grame,
Tant me fait mal departir de ma dame,
Why n'ere my wilfing brought to soche esploit
That I might saie for joye of your presence,
Or amon cœur ce qui voullcit
Or amon cœur? the higheft excellence
That er had wight, and sith mine advertence
Is in you rewith on my painis smerte,
I am so soro ywoundid to the herte.
To' live well merie two lovers were ifere,
So maie I saie withoutin any blame,
And if that any man to wilde were
I could hym techin for to be full tame,
Let hym go love and se where it be game,
For I am bridlid unto sobirnesse
For her that is of women chief princesse.
But evir when thought my hert shuld enbrace,
Then unto me it is best remedie
When I loke on your godely freshe face,
So merie a mirrour coud I ner espie,
And if I coud I would it magnifie,
For nevir none ywas so faire ysounde,
To reken 'hem all, and also Rosamounde.
And finally, with mouthe and will present,
Of double eye withoutin repentaunce,
Mine hert I yeve you, ladie', in this entent,
That ye shall thereof have the govirnaunce,
Taking my leve with hert'is obeisaunce,
(*Salve Regina*) syngyng last of all
To be our helpe when that we to the call.
All our love is bought els but idleneffe,
Save your love alone, who might therto' attain;
Who so woll have a name of gentilleffe
I counsaile hym in love that he not fain;
Thou swete ladie! refute in every pain,
Whose mercie mosse unto me availith,
To gie by grace when that Fortune failith.
Nought maie be told, withoutin any fable,
Your high renome, you womanly beaute,
Your govirnaunce, to all worship able,
Putteth every hertè in ese in his degre;
O violet! o flowir desise!
Sithin I am for you so amerous
Estreignes moy de cœur joyeux.
With fervent hert my brest hath brost on fire,
L' ardant espoer en mon cœur point est mort,
D' avoir l' amour de celle que je desire,
I menè you swete mosse plesaunt of porte,
Et je scay bien que ce n'gi pas mon tort,
That for you lyng so as I maie for mone,
For your departyng alone I live alone.
Though that I might I would none othir chese,
In your service I would ben foundin sadde,
Therefore I love no labour that ye lese,
When that in longyng forist ye be stadde;
Loke up you loviris and be right gladde,
Now ayenist Sainct Valentin'is daie,
For I have chese that ner forsake I maie.

Balade de bon conseil.

If it befall that God the list visite
With any tourment or adversite
Thanke firste the Lorde, and tho thy selfe to quite
Upon sufferaunce and humilite
Founde thou thy quarel, what er that it be,
Make thy defence, and thou shalt have no losse,
The remembraunce of Christ and of his crosse.

Somtyme the world so stedfast was and stible,
That mannes worde was an obligacioun,
And now it is so falfe and diffevable,
That worde and dede, as in conclusioun,
Is nothyng like, for tourned is up so doun
All the worlde, thorough miede and sikilneffe,
That all is lofte for lacke of stedfastneffe.
What maketh the worlde to be so variable
But lust that nevir have in discessioun?
For emong us a man is holde unable
But if he can by some colhsion

Doe his neighbour wrong an oppreſſion:
What cauſith this but wilful wretchidneſſe?
That all is loſte for lacke of ſtedfaſtneſſe.
Trouthe is put doune, reſon is holde fable,
Vertue hath now no dominacion,
Pitie 'is exiled, no man is merciable,
Through coveriſe is blente diſcrecion;
The worlde hath made a permutacion
Fro right to wrong, fro trouthe to fikilneſſe,
That all is loſte for lack of ſtedfaſtneſſe.

L'envoye.

Prince, aye deſire to be honourable,
Cheriſhe thy folke, and hate extorcion;
Suffre nothyng that maie be reprovable
To thine eſtate doen in thy region;
Shewe forthe the yerde of caſtigacion;
Drede God, do law, love treuth and worthines,
And wedde thy folke ayen to ſtedfaſtneſſe.

Balade of the village without paintyng.

Plaintife to Fortune.

THIS wretched world'is tranſmutacion,
As wele and wo, nowe pore and now honour,
Without ordir or due diſcrecion,
Govirnid is by fortun'is errour,
But nathèleſſe the lacke of her favour
Ne maie not doe me ſyng though that I die,
Y'ay tout perdu mon temps et mon labeur,
For finally fortune I doe defie.

Yet is me left the ſight of my reſoun
To knowin frende fro foe in thy mirrour,
So moche hath yet thy tourning up and doun
Itaughtin me to knowin in an hour,
But truily no force of thy reddour
To hym that ovir hymſelf hath maiſtrie;
My ſuffiſaunce yſhal be my ſuccour,
For finally fortune I do defie.

O Socrates! thou ſtedfaſt champion,
She ne might nevir be thy turmentour,
Thou nevir dreddiſt her oppreſſion,
Ne in her chere foundin thou no favour;
Thou knewe wele the diſceipt of her colour,
And that her moſte worſhip is for to lie;
I knowe her eke a falſe diſſimulour,
For finally fortune I do deſie.

The anſwere of Fortune.

No man is wretchid but hymſelf it wene;
He that yhath hymſelf hath ſuffiſaunce,
Why ſaieſt thou then I am to the ſo kene
That haſt thy ſelf out of my govirnaunce?
Saie thus, graunt mercie of thin habundaunce,
That thou haſt lent or this, thou ſhalt not ſtrive;
What woſt thou yet how I the woll avaunce?
And eke thou haſt thy beſte frende alive.

I have the taught diviſion betwene
Frende of effecte and frende of countinaunce,
The nedith not the gallè of an hine,
That curith eyin derke for ther penaunce,
Now ſeeſt thou clere that wer in ignoraunce;
Yet holt thine anker, and thou maieſt arive
There Bountie bereth the key of my ſubſtaunce,
And eke thou haſte thy beſte frende alive.

How many have I refuſſed to ſuſtene
Sith I have the foſtrid in thy pleſaunce!
Wolt thou then make a ſtatute on thy goene,
That I ſhall be aie at thine ordinaunce?
Thou born art in my reign of variaunce;
About the whele with othir muſt thou drive;
My lore is bet, then wicke is thy grevaunce,
And eke thou haſt thy beſtè frende alive.

The anſwere to Fortune.

Thy lore I dampne, it is adverſitie;
My frend maiſt thou not revin, blind goddeſſe:
That I thy frendis knowe I thanke it the;
Take 'hem again, let 'hem go lie a preſſe;
The nigardis in kepyng ther richeſſe
Pronoſtike is thou wolt ther toure aſſaile;
Wicke appetite cometh aie before ſickeneſſe;
In generall this rule ne maie not faile.

Fortune.

Thou pincheſt at my mutabilitie,
For I the lent a droppe of my richeſſe,
And now me likith to withdrawin me
Why ſhouldiſt thou my roialte oppreſſe?
The ſe maie ebbe and flowin more and leſſe,
The welkin hath might to ſhine, rain, and haile,
Right ſo muſt I kithin my brotilneſſe;
In generall this rule ne maie not faile.

The Plaintiffe.

Lo! the' execucion of thy majeſtie
That all purveighith of his rightwiſeneſſe,
That ſamè thyng Fortune yclepin ye,
Ye blindè beſtis, full of leudeneſs!
The hevin hath propirtie of ſikirneſs,
This worldè hath evir reſtleſſe travaile,
The laſt daie is the ende of myne entreſſe;
In generall this rule ne maie not faile.

Th' envoye of Fortune.

Princes, I praie you of your gentilneſſe,
Let not this man and me thus crie and plain,
And I ſhall quitin you this buſineſſe;
And if ye liſte releve hym of his pain
Praie ye his beſt frende of his nobleneſſe
That to ſome bettir ſtate he maie attain.

L'envoye.

To brokin ben the ſtatutes hie in heven
That create were eternally t' endure,
Sith that I ſe the brighte goddis ſeven
Mowe wepe and waile and paſſion endure,
As maie in yerth a mortall creature;
Alas! fro whenis maie this thing procede,
Of which errour I die almoſte for drede?

By words eterne whilom was it yſhape
That fro the fifth circle in no manere
Ne might of teris nothing doune eſcape,
But now ſo wepith Venus in her ſphere
That with her teris ſhe woll drench us here:
Alas, Scogan! this is for thine offence;
Thou cauſiſt this deluge of peſtilence.

Haſt thou not ſaied in blaſpheme of the goddis,
Through pride or thorough thy gret rekilnes,
Soche thinges as in the law of love forbode is,
That for thy ladie ſawe not thy diſtreſſe
Therefore thou yave her up at Mighelmeſſe?

Alas, Scogan! of oldè folke ne yong
Was nevir erſt Scogan blamed for his tong.
Thou drewe in ſcorne Cupide eke to recorde
Of thilkè rebell worde that thou haſt ſpoken,
For whiche he woll no lengir be thy lorde;
And, Scogan, though his bowe be not ybroken
He woll not with his arowes be iwroken
On thee ne me, ne none of our figure;
We ſhall of hym have neither hurte ne cure.
Now certis, frende, I drede of thine unhappe,
Leſt for thy gilte the wreche of love procede
On all 'hem that ben hore and round of ſhap,
That be ſo likely folkè for to ſpede,
Then we ſhall of our labour have our mede;
But well I wot thou wolt anſwere and ſaie,
Lo! oldè Grifill liſt to renne and plaie.
Naie, Scogan, ſaie not ſo, for I me' excuſe,
God helpe me ſo, in no rime doutileſs,
Ne thinke I nevir of ſlepe wake my muſe,
That ruſtith in my ſheth ſtill and in peſe;
While I was yong I put her forthe in preſe,
But al ſhall paſſin that men proſe or rime,
That every man his tourne as for his tyme.
Scogan, thou kneliſt at the ſtrem'is hedde
Of grace, of honour, and of worthineſſe,
In the ende of whiche I am dull as dedde,
Forgotten in ſolitarie wildirneſſe;
Yet, Scogan, thinke on Tullius kindeneſſe,
Mynd thy frendè there it maie fructifie;
Farwell, and loke thou ner eſt love defie.

Go forthe, kyng, and rule the by ſapience;
Biſhoppe, be able to miniſter doctrine;
Lorde, to true counſaile yeve thou audience;
Womanhode, to chaſtitie er encline;
Knight, let thy dedis worſhip determine;
Be rightous, judge, in ſavyng of thy name;
Rich, do almoſe, leſt thou leſe bliſſe with ſhame;
Peple, obei your kyng and eke the lawe;
Age, be rulid by gode religion;
True ſervaunt, be dredfull, kepe the' under awe;
And thou, povir, ſie on preſumcion;
Inobedience to youth is uttir deſtruccion:
Remembir you how God hath ſet you, lo!
And doe your parte as ye be ordained to.

Chaucer to his emptie purſe.

To you my purſe, and to none othir wight,
Complaint I, for ye be my ladie dere;
I am ſorie now that ye be ſo light,
For certis ye now make me hevie chere;
Me were as leſe be laide upon a bere,
For whiche unto your mercy thus I crie,
Be hevy againe, or els mote I die.
Now vouchſafin this day or it be night
That I of you the bleſful ſowne may here,
Or ſe your colour lyke the ſonnè bright,
That of yelowneſſe ne had nevir pere;
Ye be my life, ye be my hert'is ſtere;
Quene of comfort and of gode companye,
Be hevy againe, or els mote I die.

Nowe purſe, that art to me my liv'is light,
And ſayvour, as downe in this worlde here,
Oute of this townè helpe me by your might,
Sithin that you wol not be my treſoure,
For I am ſhave as nighe as any frere,
But I prayin unto your curtiſye
Be hevy againe, or els mote I die.

Chaucer unto the Kinge.

O Conquèrour of Brut'is Albion!
Whiche that by lyne and fre eleccion
Ben very kinge, this unto you I ſende,
And ye whiche that may al harmis amende
Have minde upon my ſupplication.

A balade made by Chaucer, teching what is gentilneſs, or who is worthy to be caled gentil.

The firſtè ſtocke, father of gentilnes,
What man deſirith gentill for to be,
Muſt folowe' his trace, and all his wittis dres
Vertue to love and vicis for to ſle,
For unto vertue longith dignite,
And not the revers, ſaſly dare I deme,
Al were he mitir, crowne, or diademe.
This firſtè ſtocke was full of rightwiſnes,
Trewe of his worde, ſobir, pitous, and fre,
Clene of his goſte, and lovid beſineſſe,
Againſt the vice of ſlouth in honeſte,
And but his eyre love vertue as did he
He is not gentyl though he riche ſeme,
Al were he mitir, crowne, or diademe.
Vicè may wel be eyre to olde Richeſſe,
But ther may no man, as men may well ſe,
Byquethe his eire his vertuous nobleſſe,
That is appropried unto no degre
But to the firſt fathir in majeſte,
That makith his eyre him that can him queme,
Al were he mitir, crowne, or diademe.

A proverbe agayngt covetiſe and negligence.

What ſhal thes clothes thus manifolde
Lo, this hote ſomirs daye!
Aftir grete hetè comith colde;
No man caſte his pilche awaye.
Of al this world the large compaſſe
Wil not in myne armes tweine,
Who ſo mokil wol enbrace
Lite therof ſhall diſtreine.

A balade whiche Chaucer made againſt women unconſtaunt.

Madame, ye have for your newfangleneſſe
Many a ſervaunt put out of your grace;
I take my lève of your unſtedfaſtneſſe,
For well I wote while ye to live have ſpace
Ye can not love full haſe yere in a place;

To newe thinges your luſte is evere kene;
In ſtede of blew thus may ye were al grene.
Ryght as a mirour that nothing may' enpreſſe
But lightli as it cometh ſo mote it paſſe,
So fareth your love, your workis bereth witnes;
Ther is no faithe may youre herte enbrace,
But as a wedircock, that turneth his face
With every winde, ye fare, and that is ſene;
In ſted of blew thus may ye were al grene.
Ye might be ſhrined for your brotilneſſe
Better than Dalila, Creſſeide, or Candace,
For evir in chaunging ſtondeth your ſikirneſſe,
That tache may no wight from your heart arace;
If ye loſe one ye can wel tweine purchace,
Al light for ſomar, ye' wot wel what I mene;
In ſtede of blewe thus may ye were al grene.

Here foloweth a balade whiche Chaucer made in the praiſe or rather diſpreiſe of women for ther doublenes.

THIS world is full of variaunce
In everye thinge, who takith hede,
That faithe and truſte, and all conſtaunce,
Exilid ben, this is no drede,
And ſave only in womanhed
I can yſe no ſikirnes;
But for all that yet, as I rede,
Beware alwaye of doublenes.
Al ſo that the freſhe ſomir floures,
The white and rede, the blewe and grene,
Ben ſodenly with wintir ſhours
Made feinte and fade, withoutin wene,
That truſt is none, as ye may ſene,
In no thing, nor no ſtedfaſtnes,
Except in women, thus I mene;
Yet aye beware of doublenes.
The crokid mone, this is no tale,
Some while iſhene and bright of hewe,
And aſtir that ful derke and pale,
And every monith chaungith newe,
That who the veray ſothe knew
Al thinge is bilt on brotlenes,
Save that women alwaye be trewe;
Yet aye beware of doublenes.
The luſty freſhe ſommirs daye,
And Phœbus with his bemis clere,
Towardis night they drawe awaye,
And non lengir liſt to appere,
That in this preſente life now here
Nothinge abideth in his fairenes,
Save women aye be found intere,
And devoid of alle doublenes.
The ſe eke with his ſterne wawes
Eche daye yflowith new againe,
And by the concours of his lawes
The ebbe yflowith in certeine;
Aſtir grete drought there cometh a raine;
That farewel here al ſtabilnes,
Save that women be whole and pleine;
Yet aye beware of doubleneſs.
Fortune's whele goith round aboute
A thouſand timis daye and nighte,
Whoſe coure ſtandith evir in doute
For to tranſmew, ſhe is ſo lighte,
For whiche advertith in your ſighe
Th' untruſt of worldely ſikilnes,
Save women, whiche of kindely right
Ne hath no teche of doublenes.
What man ymay the wind reſtreine,
Or holdin a ſnake by the taile?
Who may a ſlipper ele conſtreine
That it will voide withoutin faile?
Or who can drivin ſo a naile
To make ſucre newſongilnes,
Save women, that can gie ther faile
To row ther bote with doubleneſs?
At every haven they can arive
Wher as they wote is gode paſſage;
Of innocence they can not ſtrive
With wawis, nor no rockis rage;
So happy is ther lodemanage
With nedle' and ſtone ther cours to dreſſe
That Salomon was not ſo ſage
To find in them no doublenes:
Therefore who ſo doth them accuſe
Of any double entencion,
To ſpeke rowne, othir to muſe,
To pinch at ther condicion,
All is but falſe colluſion,
I dare right wel the ſothe expreſſe,
They have no bettir protection,
But ſhroud them undir doublenes.
So wel fortuvid is ther chaunce,
The dice to turnin uppe ſo doune,
With ſiſe and ſincke they can avaunce,
And than by revolucioun
They ſet a fel concluſioun
Of lombis, as in ſotheſaſtnes,
Though clerkis makin mencioun
Ther kinde is fret with doublenes.
Sampſon yhad experience
That women were ful trew ifound
Whan Dalila of innocence
With ſheris gan his here to round;
To ſpeke alſo of Roſamounde,
And Cleopatri's feithfulnes,
The ſtories plainly wil confounde
Men that apeche ther doublenes.
Single thinge ne is not ypraiſed,
Nor of olde is of no renoun,
In balaunce whan they be ypeiſed,
For lacke of waighte they be bore doune,
And for this cauſe of juſte reſoun
Theſe women al of rightwiſenes
Of choice and fre election
Moſt love eſchaunge and doublenes.

L'envoys.

O ye women! whiche ben enclined
By influence of your nature
To ben as pure as golde yfined,
And in your trouth for to endure,
Armith your ſelfe in ſtrong armure,
Leſt men aſſaile your ſikirnes,
Set on your breſt, your ſelf to' aſſure,
A mighte ſhelde of doublenes.

This worke folowinge was compiled by Chaucer, and is called the Craft of Lovers.

Moral is a fymylytude, who liſt ther balades ſewe,
The Craft of Lovers curious arguments,
For ſom bin falſe and ſom ben foundin trewe,
And ſom bin double of entendéments;
Thus lovirs with ther moral documents
And elo'quent langage can examplifye
The Craft of Love what it doth ſignifie.

Who liſt unto this balades have inſpeccion
Thinke that Lov'is lordſhipis excellente
Is remedy for diſeſe and correccion
To woful herte and body impotente,
Suppoſe the maker that he be negligente
In his compilinge, holde him excuſable,
Becauſe his ſpi'rites be ſory' and lamentable.

Soverain lady, ſurmounting your nobles,
O' intenuate jenipre' and daiſi delicious!
My truſt, mine helth, my cordial foundreſſe,
O medi'cine fanatiſe to ſores lango'rous,
Comfortable creture of lovirs amo'rous!
O'excellente herbir of lovelie countinaunce!
Regiſtir my love in your remembraunce.

Certis, Sir, your ypeinted eloquence,
So gaye, ſo freſhe, and eke ſo talcatife,
It doth tranſcende the wit of Dame Prudence
For to declare your thought or to diſcrive,
So glorioufly glad langage ye contrive
Of your conſeite, your thought, and your entence,
I wil be ware, for drede or I be ſhent.

O rubi'cunde roſe, and white as the lyly,
Clari'fied chriſtal of worldly portraiture!
O courſin figure, reſplendent with glory,
Geme of beaute'! o carbouncle ſhining pure!
Your fairnes excedeth the craft of Nature,
Moſt womanli your loveli countinaunce,
Regiſtir my love in your remembraunce.

What availeth, Sir, your proclamacion
Of curious talking, not touching ſadnes?
It is but winde, flatering and adulacion,
Imeſurable thought of worldly wildnes,
Whiche is chief cauſe of goſtly feblenes;
Your wil, your thought, your double entendement,
I wil beware of drede or I be ſhent.

My witte, my thought, and myne entencion,
Is for to pleſe you, my lady ſoveraine,
And for your love throw many a region
I would be' exiled, ſo ye wold not diſdein
To have pity on me when I compleine,
In wele and wo to ſuffre perturbaunce,
So that ye wol have me in remembraunce.

What is your wil plainly ye doe expreſſe
That maketh this curious ſupplicacion;
Seyon, Sir, on hertely tendirneſſe,
Beth well adviſed of veine delectacion,
At beginning think on the terminacion;
Paſſe not your boundes, be not to negligente,
And er beware for dred or ye be ſhente.

Your behaving, beaute, and countinaunce,
Maketh me encline to do you reverence,
Your lovely loking, glorious govirnaunce,
Overcometh my ſpirites, my wit, and prudence,
Some drop of grace of your magnificence
Unto your ſervaunt ye ſhewe attendaunce.
And regiſter my love in your remembraunce.

O comberous thought of manne's fragilite!
O fervente wil of luſtis furious!
O cruel corage cauſinge adverſite!
Of women corrupcion, and contrariouſe,
Remembir man that chaunge is perilous,
To breke the' virginite of virgines innocente,
Wherfore beware mankinde or thou be ſhent.

My peine is prevy' impoſſible to' deſerne,
My lamentabel thoughtes by caſting mourninge,
O general juge Jeſu! ſitting ſuperne,
Graciouſly converte the love of my ſwete thing;
O' amiable lady, gracious and benigne!
I put me wholy in your govirnaunce,
Exile me not out of your remembraunce,

Me ſemeth by langage ye be ſome poteſtate,
Or els ſom curious gloſir diſcevable;
What is your name mekely I make regrate,
Or of what ſcience or craft commendable?
I'm a lady' excellente and honorable,
He muſt be gay that ſhould be to 'min entente,
Wherfore I wil be ware or I be ſhent.

Lorde God! this is a ſharpe examinacion
Of her that is moſt in my memorie,
Unto you lady' I make certification,
My name' is Trew Love, of carnal deſidery,
Of manne's copulacion the verye exemplary,
Which am one of your ſervauntes of pleſaunce,
I muſt be cheſe callid to remembraunce.

I have ſought true love of yeres gret proces,
Yet fond I nevir love but for a ſeſon;
Some men be diverſe, know no gentilnes,
And ſome lackin both wiſdome and reſon;
In ſom men is truſt, in ſom men is treſon,
Wherfore I wil conclude by avyſemente,
And er beware for drede that I be ſhente.

The retour Tullius, gay of eloquence,
And Ovide, that ſheweth Craft of Love expre;,
With habundaunce of Salomon's prudence,
And pulcritude of Abſalon's faireneſſe,
And I wer poſſeſs'd with Job's grete richeſſe,
Manly' as Sampſone my perſone to avaunce,
Yet ſhuld I ſubmit me' in your remembraunce.

Now Sir, yf that it pleſe your nobilneſſe
To gyve advertence to my queſtion,
What thinge is the pleſure of ſweteneſſe,
And moſt bittir in final ſucceſſion?
Or what thing gevith man occaſion
In tender age to be concupiſcent?
Reſolve this queſtion or drede, Sir, ye' be ſhent.

My ſoveraigne lady', Ovide in his writinge
Saith deſire of worldly concupiſcence
As for a time is ſwete in his worchinge,
And in his ende he cauſith grete offence;
Notwithſtandinge, my lady Dame Prudence,
Grene flowring age and manly countinaunce
Cauſith ladies to have' it in remembraunce,

Your godely anſwir, ſo notable' in ſubſtannce,
Wold cauſe the hert of womanhede converte
Unto delyte of natural pleſaunce;
But of one thing I wolde faine be experte,
Why menne's langage wol procure and tranſ-
verte

The wil of women and virgines innocente,
Wherfore I am aferd or I be ſhente.
Let nevir the love of true love be loſed,
My ſoveraine lady, in no manir wiſe;
In your confidence my wordes I have cloſed,
My' amyable love to you I doe promiſe;
So that ye knit the knot of exercyſe
Both locke and key ye have in govirnaunce,
Emprint my love in your remembèraunce.
Of very truſt and I were certified,
The plain entencion of your herte's cordial,
Me ſemeth in bliſſe than were I glorified,
Unto your pleſure I would be' at your call
But er I fere of chauncis caſual,
Of fraude, diſceipte, and langage inſolent,
Then were I ſure maidinhed ſhould be ſhent.
Ther was ner treſour' of terreſtial richeſſe,
Nor precious ſtones rekened innumerabell,
To be of compariſon to your high godenes,
Above al cretures to' me moſt amiable;
Truſt not the contrary', I was ner diſcevabell;
Kepe wel true love, forge no diſſembèlaunce,
And graciouſly take me to' your remembraunce.
Me ſemeth by feiture of manly properte
Ye ſhuld be truſty' and trewe of comprimis,
I finde in you no falſe duplicite,
Wherfore, True Love, ye have my hert I wis
And ermore ſhal endure, ſo have I blis,
The ſede'raſy made with gode aviſement,
God graunt grace that nothir of us be ſhent!
Whan Phœbus freſhe wes in his chare ſplendente,
In the moneth of Maye, erly in a morninge,
I herd two lovirs profir this argu'mente,
In the yere of our Lorde a M. by rekening,
CCCXL. and VII. yere folowing,
O potent princeſſe! conſerve true lovirs al,
Graunt them thy region and bliſſe celeſtial.

A balade.

Or ther nature they gretly them delite,
With holy face yfeinid for the nones,
In ſaintwarie ther frendis to viſite,
More for reliquis than for ſaintis bones,
Though they be cloſid undir precious ſtones,
'i'o gete them pardon, lyke ther olde uſages,
Tok iſſe no ſhrines but luſty quike images.
Whan maidens ar wedded and houſhold have take
All ther humility' is exiled awaye,
And the' cruil hertes beginnith to awake,
They do' al the beſy cure they can or maye
To vex ther houſholde-maiſtirs, ſoth to ſaye,
Wherfore, ye yong men, I rede you forthy
Beware alwaye, *The blinde eteth many a flye.*
Of this matir I dare make no relation,
In deſaute of ſlepe my ſpirites wex feinte,
In my ſtudie I'have had long habitacion,
My body' and goſt are grevouſly attaint,
And therfore I make no lengir complaint;
But whethir that the blind ete fleſh or fiſh
I pray God kepe the fly out of my diſhe.

Now' I make an ende, and laie me doune to reſt,
For I knowe by experience verumente
If maidinis and wivis knewe and wiſt
Who made the mattir he ſhould ſone be ſhent,
Wherefore I praie that God omnipotente
Hym ſave and kepin bothe night and daie.
Writtin in the luſtie ſeſon of Maie.

The X. Commaundements of Love.

Certis ſerre extendith yet my reſon
This matir as it ſhould be to diſcrive,
But I truſte your grace will in this ſeſon
Conſidir howe with ronyng that I ſtrive,
For in his favour coud I ner arrive,
Elo'quence this balade hath in gaete diſpita,
The makir lackith manir to endite.
Of Love's commaundementes x. is the nombre,
As afterward ſhall rudely be reherſed,
And lovirs, in no wiſe deperte aſunder
Where as thei be obſervid and redreſſed,
Daungir and unkindnes ybon oppreſſed,
And he that is commaundid this to make
Is your owne, all othir for to forſake.

Faithe.

Faithe is the firſt and principally to tell,
And verie love requirith ſoche credence,
That eche beleve othir true as the goſpel,
Without adulacion or flatteryng audience,
In true menyng and truſtie confidence;
Paint not your connyng with colour ne fable,
For then your love muſt nedis be unſtable.

Entencion.

In the ſeconde to trete of entencion,
Your lovir to pleſe doe your buſie cure,
For as myn auchor Romance maketh mencion,
Without entent your love mai not endure,
As women will thereof, I am right ſure,
Endevour with ther herte, will, and thought,
To pleſe hym onely that ther love hath ſought.

Diſcrecion.

In your delyng evir ybe diſcrete,
Set not your love there as it ſhall be loſed,
Advertiſe in your minde whether he be mete,
That unto hym your herte maie be diſcloſed,
And aftir as you finde hym then diſpoſed
Poinct by diſcreſion your hour, time, and place,
Conveniently metyng with armes to' embrace.

Pacience.

Of theſe commaundementes the iiii. is pacience
Though by' irous corage your lovir be meved,
With ſoft wordis and humble obedience
His wrathe maie ſone be ſwagid and releved,
And thus his love obteinid and acheved
Will in you rote with gretir diligence,
Bicauſe of your meke womanly pacience.

Secretneſſe.

Secretlie behave you in your werkis,
In ſhewing countenance or mevyng your eye,
Though ſoche behavior to ſome folk be derke

He that hath lovid will it ſone aſpie,
Thus you your ſelf your counſaill maie deſcrie;
Make privy to your delyng few' as ye maie,
For *iii. may kepe a counſel if twain be awaie.*

Pruaunce.

Let prudence governe aye your bridil reine;
Set not your love in ſo fervent a wiſe
But that in godely haſt ye may refreine,
If that your lovirs lift you to diſpiſe:
Romaunce min auctour wold you this adviſe,
To ſlacke your love, for if ye doe not ſo
That wanton lift will tourne you into wo.

Perſeveraunce.

Stabliſhe your love in ſo ſtedfaſt a wiſe,
If that ye thinke your lovir will be true,
As entirely as ere you can deviſe,
Love hym onely and refuſe allè newe,
Then ſhall not your worſhip ychaunge his hew,
For certis, maiſtris, then is he to blame
But if that he will quite you with the ſame.

Pitie.

Be piteous to hym, as womanhod requireth,
That for your love endurith painis ſmerte,
Whom ſo ſorely your pleſaunt loke enfireth,
That printid is your beautie in his herte,
And woundid lyith without knife or darte;
There let your pitie ſpred without reſtreinte,
For lacke of it let not your ſervaunt ſeint.

Meſure.

Take meſure in your talkyng, be n'ot outrage
For this reherſith Romance de la Roſe,
A man endued with plenteous langage
Oft tymis is denyid his purpoſe;
Take meſure in langage, wiſedome ingroſe,
For meſure, as right well proved is by reſon,
Thyngis unſeſo'nable ſettith in ſeſon.

Mercie.

Soche daungir exile hym all uttirly,
Ovir all mercie to' occupie his place,
To piteous complaintis your eres applie,
And receve your true ſervaunte into grace;
To him that boundin is in Lov'is lace
Shewe favour, ladie', and be not merciles,
Leſt ye be called a common murdires.

L'envoye.

When ye unto this balade have inſpeccion
In my makyng bolde me excuſable,
It is ſubmittid unto your correccion;
Conſidir that my connyng is diſable
To write to you the figure uniable,
All devoide of connyng and experience,
Maner of indityng, reſon, and eloquence.
Truſt it well the makir is all your owne,
You to obeie while his life maie endure,
To doe you ſervice as a man unknowne,
No guerdone deſiryng of yerthly treſure,
But if it might accorde with your pleſure
For his true ſervice hym for to avaunce,
And call hym into your remembraunce.

The IX. Ladies Worthie.

Quene Sinope.

PROFULGENT in precioufneſs, O Sinope the Quene!
Of all feminine berynge the ſceptir and regalie,
Subduyng the large countrie of Armenie', as it was ſene,
For maugre ther mightis thou ybrought them for to applie,
Thin honour to encreſin and thy power to magnifie;
O moſt renoumed Hercules! with al thy pompous boſte
This princes toke the priſonir and put to fighte thine hoſt.

Ladie Hippolyte.

Yet Hercules wexed red for ſhame when I ſpake of Hippolyt,
Chief patrones and captain of the peple of Sithie,
Which with her amorous chere and with corageous might
She ſmotè ths unto the ground for all thy cruiltie,
Wherfore the dukeſhip of Diamedes and dignitie
Unto her gretè laudè and glorie perpetuall
Attributid by all is with triumphè laureall.

Lady Deiphile.

The moſt noble triumphè of this ladie Deiphile,
In releve and ſuccor of the gret Duke of Athenis,
She chaſtiſid and brought into perpetual exile
The aureat citizeinis of the mightie Thebis,
The ſtrongè braſin pilliris there haddin no reles,
But ſhe with her ſiſtir Agriſè them did downè caſt,
And with furious fire cite ybrent at laſt,

Lady Teuca.

O pulchrior ſole in beautie and full ylucident,
Of all feminine creturis the moſtè formous flour!
In Italy reigning with great chevalry right fervent,
Chaiſtiſed the Romainis as maiſtris and conquèrour,
O lady Teuca! mochil was thy glorie and honour,
Yet mochil more was to commende thy grete benignite
In thy perfite living and virginall chaſtitie.

Quene Penthefilea.

O ye Trojains! for this noble Quene Penthefile
Sorowe her mortalitie with dolorous compaſſion,
Her lovè was towardis you ſo pregnante and fertile,
Which that againiſt the proude Grekis made defenſion,
With her victorious hand was al her affeccion
To laſhe the Grekis to ground, and with ther hert 'is joie [Troie.
To revengin the coward deth of noble' Hector of

Queen Thamyris.

O thou moſt rigorous Quene Thamyris invincible! [ing,
Upon the ſtrong and hideous peple of citees reinWhiche by thy grete powir and by wittis ſenſible

Ytokiſt in battaile captive Cyrus, the grete King
Of Perſia and of Media, his hed in blode lying;
Thou baddiſt him to drinkin of the blode he had thurſtid,
And xxii. M. of his hoſte there were diſtreſſid.

Ladie Lampedo.

The famous loude trumpe ymade of gold yſorgid ſo bright
Hath blowin ſo up the fame and glory environ
Of this lady Lampedo, with her ſiſtir Maſſiſt,
That al the land of Feminie, Europe, and Epheſon,
Be yeldin and applied lowly to her ſubjeccion;
Many an high toure ſhe raiſid, and ybilt touris long,
Perpetuelly to laſtin, with hugè wallis ſtrong.

Quene Semiramis.

Lo here Semiramis, the Quene of grete Babilon,
The moſte geperous gem and the floure of loveily favor,
Whoſe excellent powir from Mede unto Septentrion
Floriſhed in her regally as a mightie conqueror,
Subdued al Barbary, and Zoraſt the King of honor,
She ſlue Ethiop, and conquirid Armenie and Inde,
In which non entrid but Alexander and ſhe as I finde.

Ladie Menalippe.

Alſo the ladie Menalippe, thy ſiſter ſo dere,
Whoſe martial powir there was no man that could withſtand,
For thorough the wide worldè there was not yfound her pere,
The famous Duke of Athenis, Theſeus, ſhe had in hande,
And ſhe forely chaſtiſid him and conquirid his lande;
The proude Grekis mightilie alſo ſhe did aſſaile,
And ovircame and vanquiſhid them bravely in bataile.

Alone walkyng,
In thought plainyng,
And ſore ſighyng,
} All deſolate,

Me remembryng
Of my livyng,
My death wiſhyng
} Both erly and late,

Infortunate
Is ſo my fate,
That wote ye what?
} Out of meſure

My life I hate.
Thus deſperate
In ſoche pore eſtate
} Doe I endure.

Of othir cure
Am I not ſure.
Thus to to endure
} Is hard certain.

Syche is my ure
I you aſſure:
What creature
} Mote have more pain?

My truthe ſo plain
Is take in vain,
And grete diſdain
} In remembrance;

Yet I full faine
Would me complaine
Me to abſtaine
} From this penaunce;

But in ſubſtaunce
None allegeaunce
Of my grevaunce
} Can I not finde:

Right ſo my chaunce
With diſpleſaunce
Doeth me avaunce;
} And thus an ende.

A ballade.

In Feverere, when that it was full colde,
Froſte, ſnowe, haile, raine, hath dominacion,
With chaungable' elementes and windes manifolde,
Whiche hath of ground, flour, herbe, jurriſdiccion
For to diſpoſe alter their correccion,
And yet Aprilis with his pleſaunt ſhoures
Diſſolveth the ſnow and bringith forthe his floures,

Of whoſe invencion lovirs maie be glade,
For thei bring in the kalendis of Maie,
And thei with countinaunce demure, meke, and ſad,
Owe to worſhip the luſtie floures alwaie,
And in ſpeciall one called ſe of the dai,
The däiſie, a flowir white and rede,
And in French callid *La bel Margarete.*

O commendable floure, and moſte in minde!
O floure and gracious of excellence!
O amiable Marga'rite! of natiſe kind,
To whom I muſt refort with diligence,
With hert, wil, thought, moſt lowly obedience,
I to be your ſervaunt, ye my regent,
For life ne deth nevir for to repent.

Of this proceſſe now forth will I procede,
Whiche happith unto me with grete diſdain,
As for the time thereof I take leſt hede,
For unto me was brought the ſore paine,
Therfore my cauſe was the more to complaine,
Yet unto me my grevaunce was the leſſe
That I was ſo nigh my ladie' and maiſtreſſe.

There where ſhe was preſent in this fame place,
I having in herte grete adverſite,
Except onely the fortune and gode grace
Of her whole I am, the whiche releved me,
And my grete dures unlaſid hath ſhe,
And brought me out of the fearful grevaunce,
If 'it were her eſe it were to me pleſaunce.

As for the wo whiche that I did endure
It was to me a verie pleſaunt pain,
Seyng it was for that faire creature
Whiche is my ladie and my ſoverain,
In whoſe preſence I would be paſſyng faine,
So that I weſt it were her pleſure,
For ſhe is from all diſtaunce my protectour.

Though unto me dreadfull ywere the chaunce,
No maner of gentilnes oweth me to blame,
For I' had levir suffre' of deth the penaunce
Than she should for me' have dishonor or shame,
Or in any wise losin her gode name;
So wisely God for his endlesse mercie
Graunt every lovir joy of his lady!

A balladc.

O Merciful and o mereiable
Kyng of kyngis, and fathir of pite,
Whose might and mercie is incomperable!
O prince eterne, o mightie Lorde! saie we,
To whom mercie is given of propirtie,
On thy servaunt that lieth in prison bounde
Have thou mercie or that his herte wounde.

And that thou wilt graunt to him thy prisoner
Fre libertie, and lose hym out of pain,
All his desires, and all his hevie chere
To all gladnesse thei were restored again,
Thy high vengeance why should thou not refrain,
And shewe mercie, sith he is penitent?
Now helpe hym Lorde, and let him not be shunte

But sith it' is so there is a trespas done,
Unto Mercie let yelde the trespassour,
It is her office to redresse it sone,
For trespasse to Mercie is a mirrour,
And like as the swete hath the price by soure,
So by Trespasse Mercie hath all her might,
Without Trespasse Mercie hath lacke of light.

What should physike doe but if sikenes were?
What nedith salve but if there were a sore?
What nedith drink wher thirst hath no power?
What should Mercie do but Trespas go' afore?
But Trespas Mercie woll be litil store,
Without Trespas ner execussion
Maie Mercie have ne chief perfeccion.

The cause at this time of my writyng,
And touchyng Mercie, to whom I make mone,
Is for fere lest my sovereigne and swetyng,
I menin her that lovelyir is none,
With me' is displesed for causis more than one;
What causis thei be that knoweth God and she,
But so do n'ot I; alas, it forthinketh me!

What se she' in me, what desiute or offence?
What have I doe that she on me disdaine?
How might I doe come into her presence,
To tell my complaint, whereof I were faine?
I drede to loke, to speke, or to complaine,
To her that hath my herte every dele;
So help me God I would al thing wer wele:

For in this case came I never or now
In Lov'is daunce so ferre in the trace,
For with myne ese escapin I ne mow
Out of this daungir, except her gode grace,
For though my countenaunce be merry' in her face,
As semith to her by worde or by chere,
Yet her gode grace settith myne herte nere.

And if my sovereine have any marvaile
Why I to her now and afore ywrote,
She maie well think it is no grete travaile
To him that is in love brought so hote;
It is a simple tre that falleth with one stroke;
That mene I, though that my soveraine to forn
Me hath denied yet grace may come to morn.

Maistris, for the gode will I have you ought,
And evir shall so long as life durith,
Pitie your servant, kepe him in your thought,
Give' him som comfort or medi'cin, and curith
His ague, that encresith, that renuith:
So grievous ben his paines and sighis sore
That without mercy his dais be forlore.

Go, litil bill, go forth, and hie the fast,
Recommende me', and excuse me as you can,
For very feble am I at the last,
My pen is woren, my hew is pale and wan,
My eyen ben sonke, disfigured like no man,
Till Deth his dart that causith for to smert
My corps have consumed, then farewel swet hert.

Doughtre' of Phœbus in vertuous apparence,
My love elect in my remembraunce,
My carefull herte distrained cause of absence,
Till ye my' empresse me release my grevaunce
Upon you 'is set my lise, myne attendaunce,
Is sette without recure I wis untill
Ye graunting my true herte to have his will.

Thus, my dere swetyng! in a traunce I lye,
And shal, til drops of pitie from you spring,
I mene your mercie, that lieth my herte nye,
That me maii rejoyce, and cause for to syng
These termes of love; lo I have won the ring,
My godely maistris; thus of his gode grace
God graunt her blisse in heven to have a place!

Here followeth how Mercurie, with Pallas, Venus, and Juno, appered to Paris of Troie, be slepyng by a fountain.*

Pallas loquitur ad Parin.

Sonne of Priam, gentill Paris of Troie,
Wake of thy slepe, beholde us goddesses thre,
We havin brought to the encrese of joye,
To thy discression reportyng our beautie;
Take here this appill, and well advise the
Whiche of us is the fairist in thy sight,
And give thou it, we praie the, gentil knight.

Juno loquitur prima.

If so be thou give it to me, Pariss,
This shal I give unto thy worthines,
Honour and conquest, nobley, lose and prise,
Victorie, courage, force, and hardines,
Gode avinture, and famous manlines;
For that appil all this give I to the,
Considir this Pariss, and give it me.

Venus loquitur ad Parin.

Naie, give it me, and this I shall you give,
A glad aspecte with favour and fairne,

* The title in Speght and Urry runs, How Mercury, with Pallas, Venus, and Minerva, &c. but as Pallas and Minerva is one and the same goddess, and as Juno was the third goddess at this interview with Paris, her name in the title, and as one of the appellants to the Trojan prince, is substituted for that of *Minerva*.

And love of ladies alſo while ye live,
Famous ſtature and princely ſemelines,
Accordyng to your natiſe gentilnes;
Undirſtand this gift well, I you adviſe,
And give it unto me hardly Pariſe.

Pallas loquitur ad Parin.

Ye, ye, Pariſe, takith hede unto me;
Thou art a prince yborne by thy diſcenſe,
And for to rule thy royall dignite
I ſhall the givin firſt intendemente,
Diſcrecion, prudence in right judgemente,
Whiche in a prince is thing moſt covenable:
Give it to me; I am to have it able.

A balade pleſaunte.

I HAVE a ladie, where ſo that ſhe be,
That ſeldome is ſhe ſoveraine of my thought,
On whoſe beautie when I beholde and ſe,
Remembryng me how well ſhe is ywrought,
I thanke Fortune, that to her grace me brought,
So faire is ſhe, but nothyng angelike,
Her beautie is unto none othir like.
For hardily and ſhe were made of braſſe,
Her face and all, ſhe hath enough fairneſſe;
Her eyen ben holow' and grene as any graſſe,
And raveniſh yelowe is her ſounitreſſe,
Thereto ſhe hath of every comelineſſe,
Soche quantitie givin her by Nature
That with the leſt ſhe is of her ſtature.
And as a bolt her browis ben ibent,
And betill browed ſhe is alſo with all,
And of her witte as ſimple' and innocent
As is a childe that can no gode at all;
She is not thicke, her ſtature is but ſmall;
Her fingers ben litil and nothyng long;
Her ſkin is ſmothe as any ox'is tong:
Thereto ſhe is ſo wiſe in daliaunce,
And beſet her wordis ſo womanly,
That her to here it doeth me diſpleſaunce,
For that ſhe ſaieth is ſaied ſo connyngly
That when there be no mo then ſhe and I
I had levir ſhe were of talkyng ſtill
Then that ſhe ſhould ſo godelie ſpeche ſpill.
And ſlothe none ſhall ye have in her entreſſe,
So diligent is ſhe and vertueſſe,
And ſo buſie aie all gode to undreſſe,
That as ſhe ape ſhe is harmleſſe,
And as an harnet meke and pitèleſſe,
With that ſhe is ſo wiſe and circumſpecte
That prudence none her ſolie can infecte.
Is it not joye that ſoche one of her age,
Within the boundes of ſo grete tendirneſſe,
Should in her werke be ſo ſadde and ſo ſage,
That of the weddyng ſawe all the nobleſſe
Of Quene Jane, and ywas tho as I geſſe
But of the age of yeris ten and five?
I trowe there are not many ſoche alive.
For, as Jeſu my ſinfull ſoulè ſave,
There n'is creture in all this worlde livyng
Like unto her that I would gladly have,
So pleſith mine hert that godely ſwete thyng,
Whoſe ſoule in haſte unto his blis ybring
That firſt her formid to be a creture,
For were ſhe well of me I did no cure.

An other balade.

O Moſſie quince! yhangyng by your ſtalke,
The whiche no man dare plucke awaie nor take
Of all the folke that paſſe forthe by or walke,
Your flouris freſhe ba ſallen awaie and ſhake;
I am right ſorie, maiſtreſſe; for your ſake;
Ye ſeme a thyng that all men have forgoten;
Ye be ſo ripe ye wexin almoſte roten.
Your uglie chere deinous and freward,
Your gryne eyin, frowayng and nothing glad,
Your chekes, enbolned like a melowe coſtard,
Colour of orenge, your breſtes fatournad,
Gilt on wara'unte, the colour wil not fade,
Bawſin battockid, belied like a tonne,
Men crie S. Barba'ry at the' loſing of your gonne.
Lovely lende maiſtris, take conſideracion,
I 'am ſo ſorrowfull there as ye be' abſent,
Floure of the barkfate ſouleſt of al the nacion,
To love you but a litele' is myne entent;
The ſwers hath ſent you, the ſmoke hath you ſhent,
I trow y' have ben laid on ſome kill to drie,
You do ſoch worſhip there as ye be preſent,
Of al women I love you heſt a M. timis fie.

A balade warnyng men to beware of deceitfull women,

LOKE well aboute ye that loviris be,
Let not your luſtis lede you to dotage,
Be not enamoured on all thynges ye ſe;
Sampſon the forte and Salomon the ſage
Deceivid were for all ther grete courage;
Men demin it right that thei ſe with eye,
Beware therefore, *The blind eteth many' a flie.*
I mene of women; for all ther cheres queint,
Truſt them not to moch, ther truthe is but treſon
The fairiſt outward wel can thei ypaint,
Ther ſtedfaſtneſſe endurith but a ſeſon,
For thei ſaine frendlines and worchip treſon,
And for thei are chaungable natu'rally,
Beware therefore, *The blind eteth many' a flie*
What wight on lyve ytruſtith on ther cheres
Shall have at laſt his guerdon and his mede;
Thei can ſhave nerir than raſours or ſheres:
All is not gold that ſhinith, men take hede,
Their galle is hid undir a ſugrid wede;
It is but queint ther fantaſie to' aſpie,
Beware therefore, *The blind eteth many' a flie.*
Though all the worldè doe his buſie cure
To make women ſtandin in ſtableneſſe
It would not be; it is againſt nature;
The worlde is doe when thei lacke doublenes,
For thei laugh and love not, this is expreſſe;
To truſt on them it is but fantaſie,
Beware therfore, *The blind eteth many' a flie.*

Women of kindè hath condicions thre;
The firſt is that thei be full of diſſeite,
To ſpinnin alſo is ther propertie,
And women have a wondirfull conſeite,
For thei can wepe oft, and all is a ſleite,
And when thei liſt the tere is in the eye,
Beware therfore, *The blind eteth many' a flie.*
In ſoth to ſaie, though all the yerth ſo wanne
Wer parchèment ſmoth, white and ſcribabell,
And the gret ſe, that called is the' Ocean,
Were tournid into ynke blacker than ſabell,
Eche ſticke a pen, eche man a ſcrivener abel,
Not coud thei writin woman's trechirie,
Beware therfore, *The blind eteth many' a flie.*

A balade declaring that womens chaſtite doth muche excel all treſure worldly.

In womanhede, as auctours al ywrite,
Moſt thing commendid is chaſte honeſte,
Thing moſt ſlaund'erous ther nobles to atwite,
As when women of haſty fraëlte
Exceden the bondes of wifely chaſtite,
For what availeth lynage or rial blode
When of ther lvying the report 'is not gode?
The holy bed deſoilid of marriage
For ones defoiled may not recovered be.
The vice goth forth and the froward langage
By many' a relme and many' a grete cite;
Slaundir hath a cuſtome, and that' is grete pite,
That true or fals, by a contrarious ſoune,
Onis areiſe it goth not lyghtly downe:
For when a lechour by force or maſtry
Defoulid hath of virgins the clennes,
Widous oppreſſed, and ly in advoutry,
Aſſailid wives that ſtode in ſtablenes,
Who may then ther ſlaundèrous harme redreſſe
When ther gode name is hurt by ſoch report?
For fame loſt ones can ner have his reſort.
A theſe may robbe a man of his richeſſe,
And by ſome mene make reſtitucion,
And ſome man maye dyſherit and oppreſſe
A povir man from his poſſeſſion,
And aftir make him ſatisfaccion,
But *No man may reſtore in no degre*
A maid robbid of her virginite,
A man may alſo bete a caſtil doune,
And bilde it aftir more freſhe to the ſight,
Exile a man out of his regioune,
And him revoke whether it be wrong or right,
But *No man hath the povoir ne the might*
For to reſtore the palace virginal
Of Chaſtite when brokin is the wal.
Men may alſo put out of ther ſervice,
And officirs remeve out of ther place,
And at a day, when Fortune liſt deviſe,
They may again reſtorid be to grace,
But *Ther n'is timè nothir ſet ne ſpace,*
Nor ner in ſtory neithir rad ne ſein,
That maydenhode loſt recovered was again:
For whiche men ſhouldin have a conſcience,
Rewe in ther hertis and repentin ſore,
And havin a remorce of gret offence
To raviſhe thing which they may not reſtore,
For it is ſaide, and hath be ſaid ful yore,
The emerand grene of parfite chaſtite
Stole ones away may not recovered be.
And hard it is to raviſhe a treſour
Whiche of nature is not recuperable;
Lordſhip may not of kinge nor emperour
Reforme a thinge whiche is nat reformable;
Ruſt of defamè is inſeparable,
And *Maidinhode yloſt of newe or yore*
No man in live may it again reſtore.
The Romanes olde thorough ther pacience
Suffirid tyrauntes in ther tyranyes
On ther cites to do grete violence,
The peple to oppreſſe with ther roberies,
But them to puniſhe they ſet gret eſpies
On falſe avouterers, as it is wel couth,
Which widowes raviſh and maidens in their youth.

Chaucer's wordes unto his owne ſcrivenere.

Adam Scrivenere, yf ever it the befalle
Boece or Troiles for to write new
Under thy longe lockes thou maiſt have the ſcalle,
But after my makynge thou write more true,
So ofte adaye I mote thy werke renew
It to correcte and eke to rubbe and ſcrape,
And al is thorow thy negligence and rape.

THE LIFE OF SURREY.

After the death of Chaucer, no conſiderable improvements were made in Engliſh poetry, till about the beginning of the ſixteenth century. At that period, our intercourſe with Italy, not only introduced the ſtudy of claſſical literature into England, but gave a new turn to our vernacular poetry. The language and the manners of Italy, were eſteemed and ſtudied. The ſonnets of Petrarch, were the great models of compoſition. They entered into the genius of the faſhionable manners; and in the boiſterous, but poliſhed court of Henry the Eighth, Petrarch of courſe became the popular poet.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, the unrivalled ornament of that court, and of his age, led the way to great improvements in Engliſh poetry, by a happy imitation of Petrarch, and other Italian poets, who had been moſt ſucceſsful in painting the anxieties of love with pathos and propriety.

He was the ſon and grandſon of two Lord Treaſurers, Dukes of Norfolk; and in his early childhood, diſcovered the moſt promiſing marks of lively parts, and an active mind.

While a boy, he was habituated to the modes of a court at Windſor Caſtle, where he reſided, yet under the care of proper inſtructors, in the quality of a companion to Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond, a natural ſon of King Henry, and of the higheſt expectations.

A friendſhip of the cloſeſt kind commencing between them, about 1530, they were both removed to Cardinal Wolſey's College at Oxford; which was one of the firſt ſeminaries of an Engliſh univerſity that profeſſed to explode the pedantries of the old barbarous philoſophy, and to cultivate the graces of polite literature.

Two years afterwards, he accompanied his noble friend into France, where they received King Henry on his arrival at Calais, to viſit Francis the Firſt, with a moſt magnificent retinue.

The friendſhip of theſe two young noblemen, was ſoon ſtrengthened by a new tie; for Richmond married Lady Mary Howard, Surrey's ſiſter.—Richmond, however, appears to have died in 1536, about the age of ſeventeen, having never cohabited with his wife.

It was long before he forgot the untimely loſs of this amiable youth, the friend and aſſociate of his childhood, and who nearly reſembled himſelf in genius, refinement of manners, and liberal acquiſitions.

It is not known at what period he began his travels. They have the air of a romance. He made the tour of Europe in the true ſpirit of chivalry; proclaiming the unparalleled charms of Geraldine his miſtreſs, and prepared to defend the cauſe of her beauty with the weapons of knight errantry.

In his way to Italy, he paſſed a few days at the Emperor's court, where he became acquainted with Cornelius Agrippa. This celebrated adept in natural magic, ſhewed him, in a mirror of glaſs, a living image of Geraldine, reclining on a couch, ſick, and reading one of his moſt tender ſonnets by a waxen taper. His imagination was heated anew by this intereſting and affecting ſpectacle. Inflamed with every enthuſiaſm of the moſt romantic paſſion, he haſtened to Florence, the original ſeat of the anceſtors of his Geraldine; and on his arrival, immediately publiſhed a defiance againſt any perſon who ſhould preſume to diſpute the ſuperiority of her beauty. The grand Duke of Tuſcany permitted this important trial to be decided. The challenge was accepted, and Surrey victorious.

His heroic vanities did not, however, so totally engross the time which he spent in Italy, as to alienate his mind from literature: he studied, with the greatest success, a critical knowledge of the Italian language, and attained a just taste for the peculiar graces of the Italian poetry.

He was recalled to England, for some idle reason, by the King, and appeared at court the most polite lover, the most learned nobleman, and the most accomplished gentleman of his age.

He shone in the tournaments of the court; and his name is renowned in the military achievements of that martial age.

In 1542, he marched into Scotland as a chief commander in his father's army, and was conspicuous for his conduct and bravery at the memorable battle of Flodden-field, where James the Fourth of Scotland was killed.

The year following, he was imprisoned in Windsor Castle, for eating flesh in Lent; a circumstance worthy of notice, only as it marks his character, impatient of any controul, and regardless of petty formalities, and as it gave occasion to one of his most sentimental and pathetic sonnets.

In 1544, he was field-marshal of the English army in the expedition to Boulogne, which he took; but being defeated, endeavouring to cut off a convoy of the enemy, a disgrace he repaired, he lost the King's favour, and was superseded by the Earl of Hertford.

Conscious of his high birth and capacity, he could not refrain, upon this occasion, from dropping some reproachful expressions against a measure which seemed to impeach his personal courage.

It was his misfortune to serve a monarch, whose resentments, which were easily provoked, could only be satisfied by the most severe revenge.

The brilliancy of his character was viewed by Henry with disgust and suspicion. His popularity was misconstrued into a dangerous ambition, and gave birth to accusations equally groundless and frivolous.

He was suspected of a design to marry the princess Mary; and it was insinuated that he conversed with foreigners, and corresponded with Cardinal Pole.

The addition of the arms of Edward the Confessor to his own, though justified by the usage of his family, and the authority of the heralds, was made a foundation for an impeachment of high-treason.

He was arraigned at Guildhall; and notwithstanding his eloquent and manly defence, he was condemned by the prepared suffrage of a servile and obsequious jury, and beheaded on Tower-hill, January 19th 1546-7.

The Duke of Norfolk, charged with allegations equally groundless, escaped the same unhappy fate, by the death of the tyrant, which happened nine days after the unmerited death of his son.

Surrey was buried in the church of All Hallows-Barking, Tower-street, but afterwards removed to Framlingham, Suffolk, where an honourable monument was erected to his memory, by his second son, Henry Earl of Northampton.

He married Frances, daughter of John Earl of Oxford; by whom he left several children. One of his daughters, Jane, Countess of Westmoreland, was among the learned ladies of that age, and became famous for her knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages.

History is silent as to the name of the *fair Geraldine*, the general object of his passionate sonnets, and as to the reasons why the gallantries he performed for her, did not end in a marriage.

The notices concerning her in his sonnets are obscure and indirect; but they have been illustrated with the most happy sagacity by the present Earl of Orford, and applied to Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, whose poetical name is almost her real one. She was second daughter of Gerald Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare, second cousin to the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth, bred up with them, as it is conjectured, at Hunsdon-House, and afterwards the third wife of Edward Clinton, Earl of Lincoln.

His *Songes and Sonnettes*, as they have been stiled, were first collected and printed at London, by Tottell, in 1557, together with the "Songes and Sonnettes" of his amiable and accomplished friend Sir Thomas Wyat, the elder, and of uncertain authors. Another edition appeared 1565. Others in 1574, 1585, 1587. The last edition was printed in 1717. They are now, for the first time, received into a collection of classical English poetry.

They were in high reputation with his contemporaries, and for many years afterwards, though they are ſcarcely known at preſent. They have been praiſed by Leland, Sydney, Tuberville, Puttenham, Churchyard, and Drayton, and in more recent times by Dryden, Waller, Fenton, and Pope. They merit attention equally as compoſitions of real and intrinſic merit, and as objects of curioſity.

They are chiefly amatory and ſentimental; but in elegance of ſentiment, and in nature and ſenſibility, they are equal to the beſt love verſes in our language; and in harmony of numbers, perſpicuity of expreſſion, and facility of phraſeology, they approach ſo near the productions of the preſent age, that they will hardly be believed to have been produced in the reign of Henry the Eighth.

But Surrey was not merely the poet of idleneſs and gallantry. He was fitted, both from nature and ſtudy, for the more ſolid and laborious parts of literature. He tranſlated the 2d and 4th books of the Æneid into blank verſe, which are the firſt compoſitions extant, in that meaſure, in the Engliſh language. They were printed in 1557, 12mo; but the book is ſo extremely ſcarce, that a copy could not be procured for this edition of his works. He wrote many other poems, which were never publiſhed, and are now perhaps entirely loſt. He tranſlated the Eccleſiaſtes of Solomon into Engliſh verſe. He alſo tranſlated a few of the Pſalms into metre. Theſe verſions of Scripture ſhew that he was a friend to the Reformation. Among his works are alſo mentioned a poem on the death of his friend the Duke of Richmond, an exhortation to the city of London, a tranſlation of Boccace's epiſtle to Pinus, and ſeveral Latin epiſtles.

All his biographers, particularly the Earl of Orford and Mr. Warton, have been laviſh, and very juſtly, in his praiſe; he merits the higheſt encomiums, as the firſt refiner of our language, and the unrivalled ornament of his age and country, and challenges the gratitude and eſteem of every man of literature, for the generous aſſiſtance he afforded it in its infancy, and his ready and liberal aſſiſtance to all men of merit in his time.

His poetical character is ſo elegantly drawn by the happy pencil of Mr. Warton, as to render the bungling after-ſtrokes of a caſual hand unneceſſary.

"In the ſonnets of Surrey," ſays that judicious and claſſical critic, whoſe death is an irreparable loſs to Engliſh literature, "we are ſurpriſed to find nothing of that metaphyſical caſt, which marks the Italian poets, his ſuppoſed maſters, eſpecially Petrarch. Surrey's ſentiments are for the moſt part natural and unaffected; ariſing from his own feelings, and dictated by the preſent circumſtances. His poetry is alike unembarraſſed by learned alluſions, or elaborate conceits. If he copies Petrarch, it is Petrarch's beſt manner, where he deſcends from his Platonic abſtractions, his refinements of paſſion, his exaggerated compliments, and his play upon oppoſite ſentiments, into a track of tenderneſs, ſimplicity, and nature.

"Surrey, for his juſtneſs of thought, correctneſs of ſtyle, and purity of expreſſion, may juſtly be pronounced the firſt Engliſh claſſical poet. He unqueſtionably is the firſt polite writer of love verſes in our language."

THE ORIGINAL PREFACE.

THAT to have well written in verſe, yea and in ſmall parcelles, deſerveth great prayſe. The workes of dyvers Latines, Italians and other, doe prove ſufficiently, that our tong is able in that kynde to deoc as prayſe worthely as the reſt, the Honorable Style of the Noble Earl of Surrey, and the weightineſſe of the deep witted Syr Thomas Wyat the Elders verſe, with ſeveral graces in ſundry good Engliſh writers, doe ſhoe abundantly. It reſteth nowe (gentle reader) that thou thynke it not evil done, to publyſh to the honour of the Englyſh tong, and for the profit of the ſtudiouſe of Englyſh Eloquence, thoſe woorkes whiche the ungentle horders up of ſuche treaſure, have heretofore envyed thee; and for this point (good reader) thyne owne profite and pleaſure in theſe preſently, and in mo hereafter ſhall aunſwere for my defence. If perhappes ſome myſlyke the flatelineſſe of ſtyle removed from the rude ſkyll of common eares: I aſk helpe of the learned to defende thyre learned frend the authore of this woorke, and I exhorte the unlearned by reading to learne to be more ſkyllfull, and to purge that ſwinelike groſſeneſſe that maketh the ſweet maſeroine not to ſmell to theyr delight.

SONGES AND SONNETTES.

Deſcription of the reſtleſs ſtate of a Lover, with Sute to his Lady, to rue on his dieng hart.

THE Sunne hath twyſe brought fourth his tender grene,
Twyſe cladde the earth in lyvely luſtineſſe;
Ones have the wyndes the trees dyſpoled clene,
And once agayne begynnes theyr cruelneſſe,
Synce I have hyd under my breſt the harme,
That never ſhall recover healthfulneſſe.
The wynters hurt recovers with the warme,
The parched grene reſtored is with ſhade:
What warmth, alas! may ſerve for to dyſarme
The froſen hart that myne inflame hath made?
What colde agayne is able to reſtore
My freſh grene yeares, that wither thus and fade.
Alas! I ſee nothing has hurt ſo ſore
But tyme, in tyme reduceth a returne:
In tyme my harme encreaſeth more and more
And ſeemes to have my cure allwayes in ſcorne,
Strange kindes of death, in lyfe that I doe trye
At hand to melt, farre of in flame to burne:
And lyke as tyme lyſt to my cure applye,
So doth eche place my comfort cleane refuſe.
All things alive, that ſeeth the heavens with eye,
With cloke of night may cover a * excuſe
Itſelf from travayle of the dayes unreſt,
Save I, alas! againſt all others uſe
That then ſtyrre up the tormentes of my breaſte;
And curſe eche ſtarre as cauſer of my fate:
And when the ſun hath eke the darke oppreſt,
And brought the day, it doth nothing abate
The travayles of myne endleſs ſmarte and payne:
For then as one as hath the light in hate,
I wiſh for night more covertly to playne
And me withdrawe from every haunted place,
Leſt by my chere my chaunce appeare to playne,
To ſeeke the place where I my ſelf had loſt,
And in my mynde I meaſure pace by pace.
That day that I was tangled in the lace,
In ſemyng ſlacke that knitted ever moſt;
But never yet the travayll of my thought
Of better ſtate, could cache a cauſe to boſt:
For if I founde ſometime that I have ſought,
Thoſe fleires by whom I truſted of the port,
My ſayles do fall, and I advaunce right nought,
As ankred faſt, my ſprites do all refuſe
To ſtand agazed, and ſink in more and more:
The deadly harme which he doth take in ſporte
Lo! if I ſeek, how I do find my ſore!
And if I flee, I caſy with me ſtyll
The venomed ſhaft which doth hys force reſtore
By haſt of flight, and I may plague my ſill
Unto my ſelf, unleſs this carefull ſong
Print in your hart ſome parcell of my tene
For I alas! in ſilence all tho long
Of myne olde hurt, yet feele the wound but grene:
Rue on my lyfe, or elſe your cruel wronge
Shall well appeare and by my death be ſene.

Deſcription of Spring, wherein eche thing renewes, ſave only the Lover.

THE ſoote ſeaſon that bud, and bloome fourth bringes,
With grene hath cladde the hyll, and eke the vale,
The nightingall with fethers new ſhe ſinges;
The turtle too her mate hath told her tale;
Somer is come, for every ſpray now ſpringes.
The hart hath hung hys olde head on the pale;
The bucke in brake his winter coate he flynges;
The fiſhes flete with newe repayred ſcale:
The adder all her flough away ſhe flynges.
The ſwift ſwallow purſueth the flyes ſmalle,
The buſy bee her honey how ſhemynges;
Winter is worne that was the flowres ball.
And thus I ſee among theſe pleaſant thynges
Eche care decayes, and yet my ſorrow ſpryngeth.

Deſcripcion of the reſtleſs ſtate of a Lover.

WHEN youth had led me halfe the race,
That Cupides ſcourge had made me runne;
I looked back to meet the place,
From whence my weary courſe begunne:
And then I ſaw howe my deſyre
Miſguiding me had led the waye,
Myne eyne to greedy of theyre hyre,
Had made me loſe a better prey.
For when in ſighes I ſpent the day,
And could not cloake my grief with gayne;

The boyling ſmoke dyd ſtill bewray,
The preſent heate of ſecret flame:
And when ſalt teares do bayne my breaſt,
Where love his pleaſent traynes hath ſowen,
Her beauty hath the fruytes oppreſt,
Ere that the budded were ſpronge and blowne.
And when myne eyen dyd ſtill purſue,
The flying chaſe of theyre requeſt;
Theyre greedy looks dyd oft renew,
The hydden wounde within my breſte.
When every loke theſe cheekes might ſtayne,
From dedly pale to glowing red;
By outward ſignes appeared playne,
To her for helpe my hart was fled.
But all to late love learneth me,
To paynt all kynd of colours new;
To blynd theyre eyes that elſe ſhould ſee
My ſpeckled chekes with Cupids hew.
And now the covert breſt I clame,
That worſhit Cupide ſeeretely;
And nouriſhed hys ſacred flame,
From whence no blairing ſparkes do flye.

Deſcripcion of the fickle Affections, Pangs, and Sleightes of Love.

Suche wayward wayes hath Love, that moſt part in diſcord
Our willes do ſtand, whereby our hartes but ſeldom do accord:
Decyte is hys delighte, and to begyle and mocke
The ſimple hartes who he doth ſtrike with froward divers ſtroke.
He cauſeth th' one to rage with golden burning darte,
And doth alay with leaden cold, again the others harte.
Whoſe gleames of burning fyre and eaſy ſparkes of flame,
In balance of unequal weyght he pondereth by ame
From eaſye ford where I myghte wade and paſs full well,
He me withdrawes and doth me drive, into a depe dark hell:
And me witholdes where I am calde and offred place,
And willes me that my mortal foe I do beſeke of grace;
He letres me to purſue a conqueſt welnere wonne
To followe where my paynes were loſt, ere that my ſute begunne. turne
So by this means I know how ſoon a hart may
From warre to peace, from truce to ſtryſe, and ſo agayne returne.
I know how to content my ſelf in others luſt,
Of little ſtuffe unto my ſelf to weave a webbe of truſt:
And how to hyde my harmes with ſole dyſſemblyng chere
Whan in my face the painted thoughtes wou'd outwardly appeare. dred
I know how that the bloud forſakes the face for
And how by ſhame it ſtaynes agayne the chekes with flamyng red:
I know under the grene, the ſerpent how he lurkes:
The hammer of the reſtleſs forge I wote eke how it workes.
I know, and can by roate the tale that I woulde tell
But ofte the woordes came fourth awrye of him that loveth well.
I know in heate and colde the lover how he ſhakes,
In ſyngeing how he doth complayne, in ſleeping how he wakes
To languiſh without ache, ſickeleſſe for to conſume,
A thouſand thynges for to devyſe, reſolvynge of his ſume; fore
And though he lyſte to ſee his ladyes grace full
Such pleaſures as delyght his eye, do not his helthe reſtore.
I know to ſeke the tracte of my deſyred foe,
And fere to fynde that I do ſeek, but chiefly this I know, loved,
That lovers muſt tranſourme into the thynge be-
And live (alas! who would believe?) with ſprite from lyfe removed.
I knowe in harty ſighes and laughters of the ſpleene,
At once to chaunge my ſtate, my will, and eke my colour clene.
I know how to deceyve my ſelf wythe others helpe,
And how the lyon chaſtiſed is, by beatynge of the whelpe.
In ſtandynge nere the fyre, I know how that I freaſe;
Farre of I burne, in bothe I waſte, and ſo my lyfe I leeſe. mynde,
I know how Love doth rage upon a yeylding
How ſmalle a nete may take and maſe a harte of gentle kynde:
Or elſe with ſeldom ſwete to ſeaſon hepes of gall,
Revived with a glympſe of grace old ſorrows to let fall. Love,
The hydden traynes I know, and ſecret ſnares of
How ſoone a loke will prynte a thoughte that never may remove. welthe
The ſlypper ſtate I knowe, the ſodein turnes from
The doubtfull hope, the certaine wooe, and ſure deſpaired hethe.

The Complainte of a Lover that defied Love, and was by Love after the more tormented.

When ſomer tooke in hande the wynter to aſſayle,
With force of myghte and vyrtue grete, his ſtormy blaſts to quaile:
And when he clothed fayre the earthe about wythe grene,
And every tree new garmented, that pleaſure was to ſene:
Mine hart gan new revive, and changed blood did ſtir
Me to withdrawe my wynter woes, that kepte wythin the dur.
Abrode, quod my deſyre, aſſay to ſet thy fote.
Where thou ſhalt fynde the ſavour ſweete, for ſprong is every rote
And to thy helthe if thou were ſycke in any caſe
Nothing more good, than in the ſprynge the ayre to ſele a place:

There ſhalt thou heare and ſee al kynde of Byrdes, ywrought
Wel tune theyre voyce, with warble ſmal, as nature hath them tought. [leave,
Thus pricked me my luſt the ſluggiſh houſe to
And for my helthe I thoughte it beſt, ſuch counſel to receave:
So on a morrow furth, unwiſt of any wyghte,
I went to prove how well it woulde, my hevy burden lyghte:
And when I felt the ayre, ſo pleaſant round aboute; [gotten out.
Lorde to my ſelfe how glad I was, that I had
There myght I ſee how Ver had every bloſſome kent, [they went;
And eke the new betrothed byrdes y coupled how
And in thyre ſonges me thought, they thanked nature much,
That by her lycence al that yere, to Love theyre hope was ſuch:
Right as they could deviſe to choſe them trees throughout,
Wyth much reyoyng to theyr Lord, thus flew they all about. [ceave,
Whyche when I gan reſolve, and in my head con-
What pleaſant lyfe, what heaps of joy, thoſe little birdes receave.
And ſaw in what eſtate I weary man was wroughte,
By want of that they had at will, and I reſcet at nought:
Lord, how I gan in wrath! unwiſely me demeane!
I curſed Love, and hym defied, I thoughte to turne the ſtreame:
But when I well behelde, he had me under awe,
I aſked mercy for my faulte, that ſo tranſgreſt his lawe,
Thou blinded God (quod I) forgive me this offence,
Unwittingly I went about to malice thy pretence:
Wherewith he gave a becke, and thus methoughte he ſwore,
Thy ſorrow ought ſuffice to purge thy faulte if it were more:
The virtue of which ſound, mine hart did ſo revive,
That I methought was made as whoale, as any man alive,
But here I may perceve, myne error and all and ſome, [ſtill undone:
For that I thought that ſo it was, yet was it
And al that was no more but mine expreſſed mynde,
That fain wou'd have ſome good reliefe, of Cupid well aſſigned.
I turned home forthwith, and might perceyve it well, [rebel
That he agreved was right ſore, with me for my
My harmes have ever ſince encreaſed more, and more, [evermore.
And I remaind without his helpe, undone for
A mirror let me be unto ye lovers all; [befall.
Strive not with Love, for if ye do, it will ye thus

Complaint of a Lover Rebuked.

Love that liveth, and raigneth in my thought,
That built his ſeat within my cative breſt
Clad in the armes, wherein with mè he fought,
Oft in my face he doth his banner reſt.
She that methought to love, and ſuffer pain,
My doubtfull hope, and eke my hot deſire,
With ſhamfaſt cloke to ſhadowe and reſtrain,
Her ſmiling grace converteth ſtraight to ire,
And cowred Love then to the hart apace
Taketh his flight, whereas he lurkes and plaines,
His purpoſe loſt, and dare not ſhewe his face,
For my Loves gilt thus faultleſs bide I paines,
Yet from my Love ſhall not my foote remove
Swete is his deth, that takes his end by Love.

Complaint of the Lover Diſdained.

In Ciprus ſpringes whereas dame Venus dwelt,
A well ſo hote, that who ſo taſtes the ſame;
Were he of ſtone, as chawed yſe ſhould melt,
And kindlede finde his breſt with fired flame.
Whoſe moyſt poiſon diſſolved hath my hate,
This creping fire my cold lims ſo oppreſt;
That in the hart that harborde fredome late,
Endleſſe deſpayre long thraldome hath impreſt.
An other ſo colde in frozen yſe is founde,
Whoſe chilling venom of repugnant kinde;
The fervent heat doth quenche of Cupides wounde
And with the ſpoted change infectes the minde;
Whereof my dere hath taſted to my paine,
My ſervice thus is grown into diſdaine.

Deſcription and Praiſe of his Love Geraldine.

From Tuſcane came my Ladies worthy race,
Faire Florence was ſometime her auncient ſeate:
The Weſtern Yle whoſe pleaſant ſhore doth face
Wild Cambers clifs, did geve her lyuely heate:
Foſtered ſhe was, with milke of Iriſhe breſt:
Her ſire, an erle, her dame, of princes blood;
From tender yeres, in Britaine ſhe doth reſt,
With kinges childe, where ſhe taſteth coſtly foode.
Honſdon did firſt preſent her to myne yien:
Bright is her hewe, and Geraldine ſhe hight,
Hampton me taught, to wiſhe her firſt for mine,
And Windſor, alas, doth chaſe me from her ſight.
Her beauty of kinde, her vertue from above,
Happy is he, that can obtain her Love.

The frailtye, and burtfulnes of Beautie.

Brittle beautie that nature made ſo fraile,
Whereof the gift is ſmall, and ſhort the ſeaſon;
Flowring to day, to morowe apt to faile,
Tickled treaſure, abhorred of reaſon:
Dangerous to deale with, vaine of none availe,
Coſtly in keeping, paſt not worthe two peaſon;
Slipper in ſliding, as is an eles taile;
Harde to attain, once gotten not geaſon.
Jewell of jeopardie, that peril doth aſſaille,
Falſe and vntrewe, enticed oft to treaſon;

Enemy to youth, that moſt may I bewaille;
Ah bitter ſwete! infecting as the poyſon,
Thou fareſt as frute, that with the froſt is taken,
To day redy ripe, to morow al to ſhaken.

A Complaint by night of the Lover not Beloved.

ALAS! ſo al thinges now doe holde theire peace,
Heaven and earth diſturbed in nothing;
The beaſtes, the ayer, the birdes their ſonge doe leaſe,
The nightes chare the ſtares aboute doth bringe:
Calme is the ſea, the waues worke leſſe and leſſe.
So am not I, whome Love alas doth wring,
Bringing before my face the great encreaſe
Of my deſires, whereas I wepe and ſing,
In joy and wo, as in a doubtful caſe,
For my ſwete thoughts, ſome tyme doe pleaſure bring;
But by and by, the cauſe of my diſeaſe,
Geves me a pang, that inwardly doth ſtinge;
When that I thinke what griefe it is againe,
To live and lacke the thing ſhould ridde my pain.

How eche thing, ſaue the Lover in Spring, Reioyceth to pleaſure.

WHEN Windſor walles ſuſteined my wearied arme,
My hande, my chin, to eaſe my reſtleſſe hed,
The pleaſant plot reueſted green with warme,
The bloſſomd bowes with luſty Ver yſpred:
The floured meades, the wedded byrdes ſo late,
Myne eyes diſcouer, and to my mynde reſorte
The ioly woes, the hateleſſe ſhort debate,
The rakehell lyfe, that longes to loues diſporte,
Wherewith, alas, the heauy charge of care
Hepte in my breſt, breakes fourth againſt my wyll,
In ſmoky ſighes that ouercaſt the ayre,
My vapor'd eyes ſuch drearly teares dyſtill.
The tender ſpring whiche quicken, where they fall,
And I halfe bent to throwe me downe withall.

A Vowe to loue faithfully howſoeuer he be rewarded.

SET me whereas the ſonne doth parch the grene,
Or where his beams do not dyſſolve the yſe,
In temperate heat, where he is felt, and ſene,
In preſence preſt of people, madde, or wiſe;
Set me in hye, or yet in lowe degree,
In longeſt night, or in the ſhorteſt day;
In cleareſt ſkye, or where cloudes thickeſt be,
In luſty youth, or when my hears are grave:
Set me in heaven, in earth, or elſe in hell,
In hyll or dale, or in the ſoaming flood;
Thrall, or at large, alyve where ſo I dwell,
Sicke, or in helthe, in evyll fame or good;
Hers will I be, and only with this thought,
Contens my ſelf, although my chaunce be nought.

Complaint that hys Lady after ſhe knew of hys Love, kept her face alwayes hydden from hym.

I NEVER ſawe my Lady laye apart,
Her cornet blacke, in colde nor yet in heate,
Sith fyrſt ſhe knew my griefe was growen ſo greate,
Whyche other fancies dryveth from my harte
That to my ſelfe I do the thought reſerve,
The whyche unwares dyd wound my woeful breſt,
But on her face myne eyes mought never reſt:
Yet ſynce ſhe knew I dyd her love and ſerve,
Her golden treſſes cladde allway with blacke;
Her ſmyleyng lookes that had thus evermore,
And that reſtraynes which I deſire ſo ſore:
So doth this cornet governe, me alacke!
In ſummer ſun, in winters breathe, a froſte,
Wherebye the lyghte of her fayre lookes I loſt.

Requeſt to hys Love to ioyne Bountie with Beauty.

THE golden gyft that Nature dyd thee geve,
To faſten frendes and feed them at thy will;
With fourme and favour, taught me to believe,
How thou arte made to ſhowe her greateſt ſkylle:
Whoſe hydden vertues are not ſo unknowen,
But lyvely dames myghte gather at the fyrſte;
Where beauty ſa her perfecte ſeede hath ſowen,
Of all other graces follow, nedes, there muſt.
Now certes Ladie, ſynce all thys is true,
That from above thy gyftes are thus elect;
Do not deface them than wyth ſamſes newe.
Nor chaunge of myndes let not the myude infect:
But mercy hyme thy frende, that doth thee ſerve,
Who ſeekes always thyne honour to preſerve.

Priſoner in Windſor, he recounteth his pleaſure there paſſed.

So cruell priſon howe could betyde, alas!
As proude Windſor: Where I in luſt and joy,
Wythe a kynges ſonne, my chyldyſh yeres dydpaſſe,
In greater feaſt, than Priams ſonnes of Troye:
Where eche ſwete place returnes a taſtfull ſowre:
The large grene where we were wont to trove,
Wyth eyes caſt up into the Maydens towre,
And eaſy ſighes, ſuch as folkes draw in Love:
The ſtately ſeates, the ladies brighte of hewe;
The daunces ſhort, long tales of greate delight
Wyth woordes and lookes, that tygers could but newe,
Where eche of us dyd pleade the others ryghte.
The palme play, where deſpoyled for the game,
With dared eyes oft we by gleames of love,
Have myſt the ball, and gote ſighte of our dame
To bayte her eyes, whyche kept the leads above
The gravel grounde, wythe ſleves tyde on the helme
On ſomyng horſe, with ſwordes and frendly hartes;
Wythe chere as though one ſhould another whelme
Where we have fought, and chaſed oft wyth dartes.

With silver droppes the meade yet spreade for ruthe,
In actives games of nimbleneſs and ſtrength,
Where we did ſtrayne trayned with ſwarmes of youthe
Our tender limmes, that yet ſhot up in lengthe.
The ſecrete groves which oft we made reſounde,
Of pleaſant playnte, and of our Ladies prayſe,
Recordyng oft what grace eche one had founde,
What hope of ſpede, what dreade of long delayes.
The wylde forreſt, the clothed holes with greene,
With raynes availed and ſwiftly breathed horſe;
Wyth cry of houndes and merry blaſtes betwene,
Where we did chaſe the fearefull harte of force.
The wyde vales eke, that harborde us eche nyghte,
Wherewyth, (alas) reviveth in my breſte;
The ſwete accorde, ſuch ſlepes as yet delyt,
The pleaſant dreames the quyet bed of reſt;
The ſecret thoughtes imparted with ſuch truſt,
The wanton talke, the dyvers chaunge of playe;
The friendſhip ſworne, eche promiſe kept ſo faſt,
Wherewith we paſt the winter nyghte away.
And wyth thys thoughte, the bloud forſakes the face,
The teares berayne my chekes of deadly hewe,
The whyche as ſoone as ſobbyng ſighes, (alas!)
Upſupped have, thus, I my playnt renewe:
O place of bliſſe! reperer of my woes!
Give me accompt where is my noble fere,
Whom in thy walles thou doeſt eche nyghte encloſe,
To other kuſe, but unto me moſt clere:
Eccho (alas!) that doth my ſorrow rewe,
Returns thereto a hollowe ſounde of playnt;
Thus I alone, where all my freedome grewe,
In pryſon pyne, withe bondage and reſtraynt:
And with remembrance of the greater griefe,
To baniſh the leſſe I fynd my chief relieſe.

The Lover comforteth himſelfe wyth the Worthyneſſe of hys Love.

When rageyng love wyth extreme payne,
Moſt cruelly diſtraynes my harte;
When that my teares as floudes of rayne,
Bear witneſs of my wofull ſmarte;
When ſighes have waſted ſo my breathe
That I lye at the poynt of deathe.
I call to mynde the navy greate,
That the Greekes brought to Troy towne,
And how the boyſterous wyndes dyde beate
Theyre ſhippes, and rent thayre ſayles adowne;
Tyll Agamemnons daughters bloode,
Appeaſed the goddeſs that them withſtood:
And how that in thoſe ten years warre,
Full many a bloody dede was done;
And many a Lorde that came full farre,
There caughte his bane (alas!) too ſoone:
And many a good knyghte overcome,
Before the Grekes had Helenne wonne.
Then think I thus ſith ſuch repayre,
So long tyme warre of valiant mienne,
Was all to wynne a lady fayre,
Shall I not learne to ſuffer then?
And think my tyme well ſpent to be,
Serving a woorthier wyghte than ſhe?
Therefore I never will repent,
But paynes contented ſtyll endure;
For like as when rough winter ſpent,
The pleaſant ſpryngе ſtraight draweth in ure,
So after raging ſtormes of care,
Joyfull at length may be my fare.

Complaint of the abſence of her Lover being upon the ſeas.

O Happy dames that may embrace,
The fruite of your delyghte;
Help to bewayle the woefull caſe,
And eke the heavy plyghte
Of me that wonted to reioyce,
The fortune of my pleaſant choice:
Good ladyes helpe to fill my mourning voice.
In ſhippe freighte wythe remembraunce
Of thoughtes and pleaſures paſt,
He fayles that hath governaunce;
My life while it will laſt.
With ſcalding ſighes for lacke of gale,
Fusderyng hys hope that is his fayle,
Toward me, the ſwete port of hys avayle.
Alas! how oft in dreams I ſee
Thoſe eyes that were my foode,
Whych ſometyme ſo delyted me
That yet they do me goode:
Wherewith I wak wythe his returne,
Whoſe abſent flame dyd make me burn,
But when I fynde the lacke, Lord, how I mourne!
When other lovers in armes acroſſe,
Reioyce their enechyſe delyght;
Drowned in teares to mourne my loſſe
I ſtand the bytter nyghte
In my window where I may ſee
Before the wyndes how the cloudes flee
Lo! what a mariner love hath made me.
And in grene waves when the ſalt floode
Doth ryſe by rage of wynde,
A thouſand fanſies in that mood
Aſſayle my reſtleſſe mynde:
Alas! how drencheth my ſwet ſo
That wyth the ſpoyle of my hart did go,
And left me, (but alas!) why did he ſo?
And when the ſeas were calme agayne,
To chace from me annoye,
My doubtful hope doth cauſe my playne,
So dredе cuts of my loye.
Thus in my wealth myngled with woe,
And of eche thought a doubt doth growe
Now he comes! will he come? alas! no!

Complaint of a dying Lover refuſed upon hys Ladyes Inſult myſtaking of hys wrytyng.

In wynters iuſt returne, when Boreas gan his raygne,
And every tree unclothed faſt, as nature taught them playne:

In mysty morning darke, as shepe are then in holde,
I hyde me fast, it sat me on, my shepe for to unfolde.
And as it is a thynge that lovers have by fyttes,
Under a palme I heard one cry, as he had lost hys wittes.
Whose voice did ringe so shryll in utterynge of hys playnt,
That I amazed was to heare, how love coulde hym attaynt,
Ah! wretched man (quod he) come death and ryd thys woe;
A iust reward, a happy end, if it may chaunce thee soe.
Thy pleasures past, have wrought thy woe without redresse;
If thou hadst never felt no ioy, thy smart had been the lesse.
And rechlesse of hys lyfe, he gan both sigh and grone,
A ruefull thynge methought it was to here hym make such mone
Thou cursed pen sayd he, wo worthe the byrde she bare,
The man, the knyfe, and all that made thee, wo be to thyre share:
Wo worth the tyme and place, where I could so endyte,
And wo be it yet once agayne, the pen that so can wryte.
Unhappy hand! it had been happy tyme for me,
If when to wryte thou learned fyrste, unjoynted hadst thou be.
Thus cursed he himself, and every other wyghte,
Save her alone whom love him bound to serve both day and nyght.
Whyche when I heard and saw, how he hymself foredyd
Against the ground with bloody strokes, hymself even thereto rid;
Had been my hart of flynt it must have melted though,
For in my lyfe I never saw a man so full of wo,
Wyth teares for hys redresse, I rashely to him ran,
And in my armes I caught hym fast, and thus I spake hym than;
What wofull wyght art thou that in such heavy case,
Tormentes thy selfe wyth such despyte here in thys desert place?
Wherewyth as all agayste, fulfylde with ire and dread,
He [illegible] on me a [illegible] loke with colour pale and dead.
Nay what art thou (quod he) that in thys heavy plyght,
Doest fynde me here, most wofull wretch, that lyfe hath in despight?
I am (quod I) but poore and symple in degree,
A shepheardes charge I have in hande, unworthy though I be.
Wyth that he gave a sighe as though the skye should fall,
And loud alas he shryked oft, and shepheard gan he call:
Come hye thee fast at ones, and prynt it in thy hart,
So thou shall know, and I shall tell, thy gyltlesse how I smart.
Hys backe agaynste the tree sore feebled all wythe faynte
Wyth weary sprite, he stretcht hym up, and thus he told hys plaint:
Once in my harte (quod he) it chaunced me to love
Such one in whome hath nature wrought her cunning for to prove:
And sure I cannot say but many yeres were spent,
With such good will so recompenst, as both we were content.
Where to shew I'me bounde, and she lykewise also,
The sunne should rune hys course awry ere we thys fayth foregoe.
Who joyed then but I? who hadde thys worldes blysse?
Who myghte compare a lyfe to myne that never thought on this?
But dwellyng in thys truth, amid my greatest joy.
It me befalled a greater losse then Priam had of Troy;
She is reversed cleane and beareth me in hand,
That my desertes have geven cause to breke thys faythful band.
And for my just excuse avayleth no defence:
Now knowest thou all, I can no more, but shepheard hye thee hence;
And gave him leave to dye, that may no longer lyve,
Whose record to I claime to have, my death I do forgeve;
And eke when I am gone, be bold to speake it playne,
Thou hast seen dye the truest man that ever love dyd payne.
Wherewith he turnde hym rounde, and gasping oft for breath,
Into his armes a tree he caught, and sayd welcome my death
Welcome a thousand fold, now dearer unto me
Than should without her love to live, an emperour to be.
Thus in this wofull state he yelded up the gost,
And little knoweth his ladye, what a lover she hath lost.
Whose death when I beheld, no marvel was it right
For pitie though my heart dyd blede, to see so piteous sight.
My bloud from heate to cold oft chaunged wonders sore,
A thousand troubles there I found I never knew before:
Twene dreade and dolour, so my spretes were brought in feare,
That long it was ere I could call to minde, what I dyd there.
But as eche thing hath ende, so had these paynes of myne,
The furies past, and I my wittes restorde by length of tyme:
Then as I could devyse, to seek I thought it best,
Where I might finde some worthy place for such a corps to rest:

And in my mynde it came, from thence not farre away
Where Creſelds love, king Priams ſone the worthy Trolus lay:
By him I made his tombe, in token he was true.
And as to him belongeth well, I covered it with blewe; [ſoone,
Whoſe ſoule by aungels power, departed not ſo
But to the heavens, ſo it fled, for to receive his dome.

Complaint of the abſence of her lover beyng upon the ſea.

Good ladies, ye that have your pleaſures in exile,
Step in your foote, come take a place, and morne with me a while:
And ſuch as by theyr lordes do ſet but little pryce,
Let them ſit ſtill, it ſkilles them not what chaunce come on the dice:
But ye whom love hath bound by order of deſyre,
To love your lords, whoſe good deſerts none other would require: [myne,
Come ye yet once agayne, and ſet your foote by
Whoſe wofull plight, and ſorrwes great, no tong can well define.
My love and lord, alas! in whom conſiſtes my welth,
Hath fortune ſent to paſſe the ſeas in hazard of his helth: [mynde,
Whom I was wont tembrace with well contented
Is now amyd the fomyng floods at pleaſure of the wynde:
Where God will him preſerve, and ſoone him home me ſend,
Without which hope my lyfe (alas) were ſhortly at an ende:
Whoſe abſence yet although my hope doth tell me playne
With ſhort returne he comes anone, yet ceaſeth not my payne:
The fearefull dreames I have, oft tymes doe grieve me ſo,
That when I wake, I lye in doubte, where they be true or no:
Sometimes the roaring ſeas, me ſemes do grow ſo hye,
That my deare Lord, ay me, alas! methinkes I ſee him dye.
An other time the ſame doth tell me he is come,
And playing, where I ſhall hym finde with his faire little ſonne.
So fourth I goe apace to ſee that lefeſome ſight,
And with a kyſſe, methinke I ſay welcome my lord my knight,
Welcome my ſwete, alas, the ſtay of my welfare,
Thy preſence bringeth forth a truce atwixt me and my care:
Then lively doth he look, and ſalveth me agayne,
And ſayth my dere how is it now that you have all this payne? [breſt,
Wherewith the heavy cares that heapt are in my
Breake fourth and me diſchargen clene of all my huge unreſt.
But when I me awake, and find it but a dreame
The anguiſh of my former wo beginneth more extreme
And me tormenteth ſo that uneath may I fynde,
Some hidden peace wherein to ſlake the gnawing of my mynde. [burne,
Thus every way you ſee wythe abſence how I
And for my wound no cure I fynde but hoape of good returne;
Save when I thynke by ſowre how ſwete is felt the more [fore:
It doth abate ſome of my paynes, that I abode be-
And then unto myſelf I ſay, when we ſhall mete,
But little whyle ſhall ſeme thys payne, the joy ſhall be ſo ſwete.
Ye wyndes I you conjure in cheifeſt of your rage,
That ye my lord ſafely ſend my ſorrowes to aſſwage.
And that I may not long abyde in thys exceſſe,
Do your good will to cure a wyght that liveth in diſtreſſe.

A praiſe of his Love, wherein he reproveth them that compare their ladies with his.

Give place ye lovers here before,
That ſpent your boaſtes and bragges in vain,
My ladies beuty paſſeth more,
The beſt of yours I dare well ſayne,
Then doth the ſunne the caundle lyght,
Or bryghteſt day the darkeſt nyght,
And thereto hath a troth as juſt,
As had Penelope the fayre,
For what ſhe ſayeth ye may it truſt,
As it by wrytyng ſealed were:
And virtues hath ſhe many moe,
Than I wyth pen have ſkill to ſhoe.
I could reherſe if that I would,
The whole effecte of natures playnt,
When ſhe had loſt the perfecte moulde,
The like to whome ſhe could not paynte:
With wringeing hands, how ſhe did cry,
And what ſhe ſaid, I know it, I.
I knowe ſhe ſwore with rageing mynde,
Her kyngdome only ſet apart;
There was no loſſe by law of kynde.
That could have gone ſo nere her hearte;
And this was chiefely all her payne.
She could not make the lyke agayne.
Syth nature thus gave her the prayſe,
To be the chiefeſt worke ſhe wroughte;
In fayth me thynke ſome better ways,
On your behalfe myghte well be ſoughte.
Then to compare (as you have done)
To matche the candle withe the ſunne.

To a Ladie that ſhorned her Lover.

Although I have a checke,
To geve the mate is harde;
For I have ſound a necke,
To keep my men in garde.

And you that hardy are,
To geve ſo great affaye
Unto a man of warre
To dryve hys men away:
I nede you take good hede,
And marke this foolyſh verſe;
For I wyll ſo provyde,
That I wyll have you ferce.
And when your ferce is had,
And all your warre is done,
Then ſhall yourſelf be glad,
To end that you begonne.
For if by chaunce I winne,
Your perſonne in the feilde,
To late then you come in
Your ſelfe to me to yelde.
For I will uſe my power,
As captayne full of myghte;
And ſuch I will devoure,
As uſe to ſhew my ſpyghte.
And for becauſe you gave
Me cheke in your degree;
This vantage lo I have,
Now check and guarde to thee:
Defend it if thou may,
Stand ſtyffe in thyne eſtate;
For ſure I will aſſay,
If I can geve the mate.

A warning to the Lover, how he is abuſed by his Love.

To dearly had I boughte my grene and youthful yeres,
If in myne age I coulde not fynde, when craft for reſt,
love apperes.
And ſeldome though I come in Court among the
Yet can I iudge in colours dymme, as deep as can
the beſt.
Where grief tormentes the man that ſuffereth ſecret ſmart,
To breake it fourth unto ſome frende, it eaſeth
well the heart:
So ſtand it now with me, (for my beloved frend)
This caſe is thine, for whom I feel ſuch torments
of my mynde;
And for thy ſake, I burne ſo in my ſecret breſte,
That tyll thou know my whole diſeaſe, my heart
can have no reſt.
I ſee how thyne abuſe hath wreſted ſo thy wittes,
That all it yeldes to thy deſire, and followes thee
by fittes.
Where thou haſt loved ſo long, with heart and
all thy power, [devour;
I ſee thee fed with fayned wordes, thy freedom to
I know, (though ſhe ſay nay, and would it well
withſtande,
When in her grace, thou yeldeſt thee moſt, ſhe
bare thee but in hand;
I ſee her pleaſant chere, in chiefeſt of thy ſuite,
When thou art gone, I ſee him come, that gathers up the fruite;
And eke in thy reſpect, I ſee the baſe degree,
Of him to whom ſhe gave the hart, that promiſed
was to thee.
I ſee (what woulde you more) ſtode never man ſure,
On womans woord, but wiſedome would inſtruct
it to endure.

The forſaken Lover deſcribeth, and forſaketh Love.

O Lothſome place where I,
Have ſeene and heard my dere;
When in my hart her eye,
Hath made her thought appere.
By glinſing with ſuch grace,
As fortune it ne woulde
That laſten any ſpace,
Between us longer ſhoulde.
As fortune did advance,
To further my deſire,
Even ſo hath fortunes chaunce,
Throwen all ammiddes the myre.
And that I have deſerved,
With true and faithfull hart;
As to his handes reſerved,
That never felt the ſmart.
But happy is that man,
That ſcapeth hath the griefe,
That love will ſeek him can,
By wanting his reliefe.
A ſcourge to quiet myndes,
It is who taketh hede;
A common plague that byndes,
A travell without mede.
This gift it hath alſo,
Who ſo enjoyes it moſt,
A thouſand troubles grow,
Yo vex his wearied ghoſt.
And laſt it may not long,
The treſt thynge of all;
And ſure the greateſt wronge,
That is within thys thrall.
But ſince thou deſert place,
Canſt give me no accompte;
Of my deſyred grace,
That I to have was wont:
Farewell! thou haſt me taughte,
To thinke me not the fyrſte,
That love hathe ſet a loſt,
And caſten in the duſt.

The Lover deſcribes his reſtleſſe Eſtate.

As ofte as I beholde and ſe,
The ſoveraigne beautie that me bounde,
The nier my comforte is to me,
Alas! the freſher is my wound.
As flame doth quench by rage of fire,
And running ſtremes conſumes by raine;
So doth the ſight that I deſire,
Appeaſe my griefe and deadly paine.
Firſt when I ſaw thoſe chryſtal ſtremes,
Whoſe beauty made my mortall woundes,
I little thoughte within her beames,
So ſwete a venom to be founde,

But wilfull Will did pricke me forth,
And blinde Cupid did whippe and guyde;
Force made me take my grief in worth
My fruitleſſe hope my harme did hide.
As cruel waves full oft be founde,
Againſt the rockes do rore and cry,
So doth my hart full oft rebound,
Againſt my breſt ful bitterly.
I fall and ſe mine own decay,
As one that beares flame in his breſt;
Forgets in paine to put away,
The thinge that bredeth mine unreſt.

The Lover excuſeth himſelf of ſuſpected change.

THOUGH I regarded not
The promiſe made by me,
Or paſſed not to ſpot
My faith and honeſtie;
Yet were my fanſie ſtrange,
And wilful will to wite;
If I ſoughte now to change
A falkon for a kite.
All men might well diſpraiſe
My wit and enterpriſe,
If I eſteemed a peſe
Above a pearle in price:
Or judged the owle in ſight,
The ſparhauke to excell;
Which flyeth but in the night
As all men know righte well.
Or if I ſoughte to faile,
Into the brittle porte;
Where anker hold doth faile,
To ſuch as do reſort;
And leave the haven ſure,
Where blowes no bluſtring winde;
Nor ſickeneſſe in ure
So farforth as I finde.
No, think me not ſo lighte,
Nor of ſo churliſh kinde,
Though it lay in my wighte,
My boundage to unbinde:
That I woulde leave the kinde
To hunt the ganders ſo.
No, no, I have no minde
To make exthanges ſo;
Nor yet to change at all,
For thinke it may not be,
That I ſhoulde ſeke to fall
From my felicitie.
Deſirous for to win,
And loth for to forgo,
How may all this be ſo?
The fire it cannot freſe,
For it is not his kinde;
Nor true love cannot leſe
The conſtancye of minde:
Yet as ſone ſhall the fire,
Want heate to blaſe and burne,
As I in ſuch deſire
Have once a thought to turne.

A Careleſſe Man ſcorning and deſcribing the ſubtle uſage of Women towards their Lovers.

WRAPT in me careleſſe cloke, as I walk to and fro,
I ſee how love can ſhew what force there reigneth in his bow,
And how he ſhoteth eke a harty hart to wound;
And where he glanceth by again, that little hurt is found.
For ſeldme is it ſene he wounde the harts alike;
The tone may rage, when tothers love is often farre to ſeke:
All this I ſee with more, and wonder thinketh me,
How he can ſtrike the one ſo ſore, and leave the other free;
I ſee that wounded wight, that ſuffereth all this wrong,
How he is fed with yeas and nays, and liveth al to long
In ſilence, though I kepe ſuch ſecretes to my ſelf;
Yet do I ſee how ſhe ſometime doth yelde a looke by ſtelth,
As though it ſemde, ywis y will not loſe the ſo.
When in her hart ſo fwete a thought did never truly grow;
Then ſay I thus, alas, that man is farre from bliſſe
That doth receive for his relief none other game but this;
And ſhe that ſedes him ſo, I ſele and find it plain,
Is but to glory in her power, that over ſuch can raigne;
Nor are ſuch graces ſpent, but when ſhe thinks that he
A wery man is fully bent ſuch fancies to let flee,
Then to retaine him ſtill, ſhe wreſteth new her grace;
And ſmileth lo as though ſhe woulde forthewith the man embrace:
But when the proofe is made to try ſuch lokes withall,
He findeth then the place alvoide, and frighted full of Gall:
Lord what abuſe is this! who can ſuch women praiſe?
That for theire glory do deviſe to uſe ſuch crafty ways: [rowe,
I that amonge the reſt, do ſit and marke the
Find that in her is greater crafte then is in twenty moe,
Whoſe tender years, alas! with wiles ſo wel are ſped,
What will ſhe do, when hory heares, are powdered in her hed?

An Anſwere in the behalf of a Woman of an uncertain Author.

GIRT in my gildes gowne, as I ſit here and ſow
I ſee that thinges are not in dede as to the outwarde ſhow. [what nere,
And who ſo liſt to loke, and note thinges ſome,

Shal find wher plaineſſe ſemes to haunt, nothing but craft appear:
For with indifferent eyes my ſelf can well diſcerne,
How ſom to guide a ſhip in ſtormes ſeke for to take the ſterne;
Whoſe practice it were proued in calme to ſtere a barge,
Aſſuredly believ it well it were to great a charge:
And ſome I ſe again ſit ſtill and ſay but ſmall,
That coulde do ten times more then they that ſay they can do all;
Whoſe goodly giftes are ſuch, the more they underſtand,
The more they ſeke to learne and know, and take leſe charge in hand.
And to declare more plain the time fleets not ſo faſt,
But I can bear full well in mind the ſong now ſong and paſt,
The auctor whereof come wrapt in a crafty cloke,
With will to force a flaming fire, where he could raiſe no ſmoke;
If power and will had joined, as it appereth plaine,
The truth no right had tane no place their vertues had been vain,
So that you may perceive, and I may ſalſly ſe
The innocent that giltleſſe is, condempned ſhould have be.

The Conſtant Lover Lamenth.

Sins fortunes wrath envieth the welth
Wherein I raigned by the ſight
Of that, that fed mine eyes by ſtelth,
With ſowre, ſwete, dread and delight,
Let not my grieſe move you to mone,
For I will wepe and waile alone.
Spite drave me into Boreas raigne,
Where hoary froſtes the fruites do bite,
When hills were ſpread, and every plaine
With ſtormy winters mantle white,
And yet my dere ſuch was my heate,
When others freaze then did I ſweate.
And now, though on the ſunne I drive,
Whoſe fervent flame all thinges decaies,
His beames in brightneſſe may not ſtrive,
With light of your ſwete golden rayes;
Nor from my breſte this heate remove,
The frozen thoughtes graven by love.
He may the waves of the ſalt floode
Quench that your beautie ſet on fyre,
For though myne eyes forbeare the foode,
That dyd relieve the hot deſire:
Such as I was, ſuch will I be,
Your owne, what woulde you more of me?

A Song written by the Earle of Surrey, *by a Lady that refuſed to Dannce with him.*

Eche beaſt can chooſe his fere according to his mynde,
And eke can ſhewe a friendly chere lyke to their beaſtly kynde;
A lyon ſaw I late as whyte as any ſnowe,
Which ſemed well to leade the race, his port the ſame did ſhowe:
Upon the gentle beaſt to gaze it pleaſed me,
For ſtill me thoughte he ſeemed well of noble bloud to be.
And as he praunced before, ſtill ſeeking for a make,
As who would ſay, there is none here, I trowe will me forſake;
I might perceive a woolfe as white as whales bone,
A fairer beaſte, of freſher hue beheld I never none,
Save that her lookes were coy, and froward eke her grace,
Unto the whiche this gentle beaſt gan him avaunce apace.
And with a becke full lowe he bowed at her feete,
In humble wiſe, as who woulde ſay, I am too farre unmeete.
But ſuch a ſcornfull chere wherewith ſhe him rewarded,
Was never ſeene I trowe the like to ſuch as well deſerved.
With that ſhe ſtart aſyde well neere a foot or twaine,
And unto him thus gan ſhe ſay with ſpyte and great diſdaine,
Lyon ſhe ſaide, if thou hadeſt known my mind before,
Thou hadſt not ſpent thy travaile thus, nor all thy paine for lore.
Do way I lete thee, wete thou ſhalt not play with me,
Go range about, where thou maiſt finde ſome meter fere for thee.
With that he bet his tayle, his eyes began to flame,
I might perceive his noble heart, much moved by the ſame.
Yet ſaw I him refrayne, and eke his wrath aſſwage,
And unto her thus gan he ſay, when he was paſt his rage.
Cruel you do me wronge, to ſet me thus ſo lighte,
Without deſert for my good will, to ſhew me thus deſpyte;
How can ye thus entreate a lyon of the race,
That with his pawes, a crowned kynge devoured in the place.
Whoſe nature is to prey upon no ſimple foode,
As long as he may ſucke the fleſh, and drink of noble bloud.
If you be fayre and freſh, am I not of your hue,
And for my vaunt I dare well ſay, my bloud is not untrue.
For you yourſelf have heard, it is not long agoe,
Sith that for love, one of the race dyd end his life in wo.
In tower ſtrong, and hye for his aſſured truth,
Whereas in tears he ſpent his breath, alas the more the ruth.
Thys gentle beaſte ſo dyed, whom nothing could remove,
But willingly to leeſe hys life for loſs of his true love.
Other there be, whoſe lives do linger ſtill in payne,
Againſt their wills preſerved are, that woulde have dyed fayne.
But now I do perceive, that nought it moveth you,
My good entent my gentle heart, nor yet my kinde ſo true.

But that your will is ſuch, to lure me to the trade,
And other ſome full many yeres to trace by craft ye made.
And thus behold our kyndes how that we differ farre,
I ſeek my foes, and you your frendes do threten ſtill with warre.
I faune where I am fed, you ſlay, that ſekes to you,
I can devour no yelding prey, you kill where you ſubdue.
My kind is to deſire the honour of the feild,
And you with bleud do ſlake your thyrſte on ſuch as to you yelde:
Wherefore I woulde you wiſe, that for your coyed lookes,
I am no man that will be trapt, nor tangled with ſuch hookes.
And though ſome luſt to love, where blameſull well they might,
And to ſuch beaſtes of current ſort, that would have travail bright;
I will obſerve the lawe, that nature gave to me,
To conquer ſuch as will reſiſt, and let the reſt go free:
And as a faulcon free, that foreth in the ayre,
Which never fed on hand nor lure, nor for no ſtale doth care.
While that I live and breathe, ſuch ſhall my cuſtome be,
In wildneſs of the woodes, to ſeek my prey where pleaſeth me:
Where many one ſhall rue, that never made offence,
Thus your refuſe againſt my power, ſhall bote them no defence.
And for revenge thereof, I vow and ſwear thereto,
A thouſand ſpoyles I ſhall commyt, I never thought to doe.
And if to lyght on you my luck ſo good ſhall be,
I ſhall be glad to feed on that, that would have fed on me.
And thus farewelle unkynd, to whom I bent and bowe,
I would you wiſt, the ſhip is ſafe, that bare his ſayles ſo lowe.
Sith that a lyons hart, is for a wolfe no preye,
With bloody mouthe go ſlake your thirſt on ſimple ſhepe I ſay.
With more deſpyte and ire, than I can now expreſſe,
Which to my payne, though I refrayn, the cauſe you may well gueſs.
As for becauſe my ſelf was auctour of the ſame,
It bootes me not that for my wrath, I ſhoulde diſturbe the ſame.

The faithfull Lover declareth his Paynes and his uncertaine Joys, and with onely hope recomfort ſomewhat his wofull heart.

If care do cauſe men crye, why do not I complayne
If eche man do bewaile his wo, why ſhew I not my payne?
Synce that amongſt them all, I dare well ſay is none,
So farre from weal, ſo full of woe, or hath more cauſe to mone.
For all thinges haveing life, ſometime hath quiet reſt,
The beaſt: The bearing aſſe, the drawing oxe, and every other
The peaſant, and the poſt, that ſerves at all aſſayes,
The ſhip boy, and the galley ſlave, have time to take their eaſe.
Save I, alas! whom care of force doth ſo conſtrayne,
To wale the day, and wake the night, continually in payne.
From penſiveneſs to plaint, from plaint to bitter teares,
From teares, to paynfull playnt againe, and thus my life it weares.
Nothyng under the ſun, that I can heare or ſee,
But moveth me for to bewayle my cruel deſtyny.
For where men do rejoyce (ſince that I cannot ſo)
I take no pleaſure in that place, it doubleth but my woe.
And when I hear the ſound of ſong or inſtrument
Methinke eche tune there dolefull is, and helps, me to lament;
And if I ſee ſome have theyre moſt deſyred ſyghte,
Alas! thynke I, eche man hath weale ſave I moſt wofull wyghte.
Then as the ſtricken deere, withdrawes himſelf alone,
So do I ſeeke ſome ſecret place, where I may make my moane.
There do my flowing eyes ſhew fourthe my melting hart,
So the ſtremes of thoſe two welles, right well declare my ſmart.
And in thoſe cares ſo could I force my ſelf a heate,
As ſicke men in theyr ſhaking fittes procure themſelfe to ſweate.
With thoughtes that for the tyme do much appeaſe my payne,
But yet they cauſe a farther feare, and brede my wo agayne.
Methinke within my thought I ſee right playne [appeere
My hartes delight, my ſorowes lethe, myne earthly goddeſſe here,
With every ſundry grace that I have ſeene her have,
Thus I within my wofull breſt her picture paynt and grave;
And in my thought I role her beauties too and fro,
Her laughing chere, her lively looke, my heart that perced ſo.
Her ſtrangenes when I ſued her ſervaunt for to be,
And what ſhe ſayde, and how ſhe ſmylde, when that ſhe pitied me.
Then comes a ſodyane feare that rueth all my reſt,
Leſt abſence cauſe forgetfulnes to ſinke within her breſt.
For when I thinke how farre this earth doth us [divyde,
Alas, me ſemes love throws me downe, I fele how that I ſlide:
But when I thinke agayne, why ſhould I thus miſtruſt,
So ſwete a wight, ſo ſad and wiſe, that is ſo true and [juſt.
For loth ſhe was to love, and wavering is ſhe not,
The farther off the more deſyrde, thus lovers tye theyr knot;

So in diſpayre and hoape plunged am I both up and downe,
As is the ſhip with wind and wave, when Neptune liſt to frowne.
But as the watery ſhowers delay the raging wind,
So doth good hoape cleane put away diſpayre out of my mynde;
And byddes for to ſerve and ſuffer patiently,
For what wot I the after weale that fortune wiles to me.
For thoſe that care do knowe, and taſted have of trouble,
When paſſed is theyr wofull payne, eche joy ſhall ſeme them double:
And bytter ſendes, the now to make me taſte the better,
The pleaſant ſwete when that it comes to make it ſeem the ſweter.
And ſo determine I to ſerve until my breath,
Yea rather dye a thouſand times than once to falſe my fayth.
And if my coole corps through weight of wofull ſmart, [hart,
Do fayle or faint, my will it is that ſtill ſhe kepe my
And when this careas here to earth ſhall be refard,
I do bequeath my weried ghoſt to ſerve her afterward.

The meanes to attayne happy Life.

MARTIALL the thinges that doe attayne
The happy lyfe, be theſe I fynde,
The riches left, not got with payne,
The fruitfull grounde, the quiet mynde,
The egall frend no grudge no ſtriſe,
No charge of rule nor governaunce;
Without diſeaſe the healthful lyfe,
The houſhold of continuance.
The meane dyet no delicate fare,
True wiſdome joynde with ſimpleneſſe;
The night diſcharged of all care,
Where wine the witte may not oppreſſe.
The faithfull wyfe without debate,
Such ſlepe as may beguile the night,
Contented with thine owne eſtate,
Ne wiſh for death, ne feare his might.

Prayſe of meane and conſtant eſtate.

Of thy lyfe Thomas, this compaſſe well marke
Not aye with full ſailes the hye ſeas to beate,
Ne by coward dred, in ſhonning ſtormes darke,
On ſhallowe ſhores thy keel in perill fret.
Who ſo gladly halſeth the golden meane,
Voide of daungers adviſedly hath his home,
Not with lothſome mucke as a den uncleane,
Nor palace like, whereat diſdayne may glome.
The lofty pyne the great wind often rives,
With violenter ſwey ſalne turrets ſtepe,
Lightnings aſſaure the high mountaines and clives,
A hart well ſtayde, in overthwartes depe,
Hoapeth amendes, in ſwete, doth feare the ſower,
God that ſendeth, withdraweth winter ſharpe,
No will not aye thus, once Phebus to lowre,
With lowe unbent, ſhall ceſſe and frame to harp,
His voyce in ſtrayte eſtate appeare then ſtoute
And ſo wiſely, when lucky gale of winde
All thy pult ſayles ſhall fill, looke well about,
Take in a riſt, haſt is waſt, prooſe dothe finde.

Praiſes of certain Pſalmes of David tranſlated by Sir T. W. *the elder.*

THE great Macedon, that out of Perſia chaſed
Darius, of whoſe huge powers all Aſie rong,
In the riche arke Dan Homers rimes he placed,
Wo feigned geſtes of heathen princes ſong,
What holy grave, what worthy ſepulchre
To Wyates pſalms ſhould Chriſtians then purchaſe:
Where he doth paint the lyvely faith and pure,
The ſtedfaſt hope the ſweete returne to grace.
Of juſt David by perfite penitence,
Where rulers may ſee in a myrrour clear,
The bytter fruite of falſe concupiſcence,
How Jewry bought Urias death ful deare.
In princes hartes Gods ſcourge emprinted depe,
Ought them awake out of their ſinfull ſlepe.

Of the Death of the ſame Sir T. W.

DIVERS thy death do dyverſly bemone,
Some that in preſence of thy livelihed
Lurked, whoſe breſtes envy with hate had ſwolne,
Yield Ceſars feares upon Pompeus hed,
Some that watched with the murderers knife,
With eager thyrſt to drinke thy giltleſſe blood,
Whoſe practiſe brake by happy end of lyfe,
With envious teares to heare thy fame ſo good,
But I, that knew what harbred in that hed
What vertues rare were tempred in that breſt,
Honour the place that ſuch a jewel tred,
And kiſſe the ground wheras the corps doth reſt,
With vapourd eyes, from whence ſuch ſtreames avayle,
As Pyramus did on Thiſbes breſt bewayle.

Of the ſame.

WYAT reſteth here, that quicke could never reſt,
Whoſe heavenly gyftes encreaſeth by diſdayne,
And vertue ſanke the deper in his breſt.
Such profit he by envy could obtayn.
A hed, where wiſdome miſteries did frame,
Whoſe hammers bet ſtyll in that lively braine,
As on a ſtythe, where that ſome worke of fame
Was dayly wrought, to turn to Britaines gayne.
A viſage ſterne, and milde, where both did growe,
Vyce to contemne, in virtue to rejoyce:
Amyd great ſtormes, whom grace aſſured ſo,
To live upright, and ſmile at fortunes choyce,

A hand, that taught what might be ſayd in ryme
That reſt Chaucer the glory of his wit.
A marke, the which (unparfited, for time)
Some may approche, but never none ſhall hit.
A tong, that ſerved in forein realmes his king,
Whoſe courteous talke to vertue did inflame,
Eche noble hart, a woorthy guyde to bring
Our Engliſh youth, by travayle unto fame.
An eye whoſe judgment none affect could blind,
Friendes to allure and foes to reconcyle;
Whoſe piercing looke did repreſent a mynde
With vertue fraught, repoſed voyde of guyle.
A hart, where dreade was never ſo impreſt,
To hyde the thought, that might the trouth avaunce
In neyther fortune loſt, nor yet repreſt,
To ſwell in welth, or yield unto miſchaunce,
A valiant corps, where force and beauty met,
Happy, alas! too happy, but for foes,
Lived, and ran the race, that nature ſet,
Of manhodes ſhape, where ſhe the mold did loſe.
But when to the heavens that ſimple ſoule is fled
Which left with ſuch, as covet Chriſt to knowe,
Witneſs of faith, that never ſhal be dead;
Sent for our health, but not received ſo.
Thus for our gilt, this jewel have we loſt,
The earth his bones, the heavens poſſeſſe his ghoſt.

Of the ſame.

In the rude age when knowledge was not ryſe,
If Jove in Crete and other were that taught,
Arts to convert to profite of our lyſe,
Wend after death to have theyr temples fought,
If vertue yet no voyde unthankfull tymes,
Fayled of ſome to blaſt her endleſs fame,
A goodly meane both to deterre from crime,
And to our ſteppes our ſequele to enflame:
In dayes of truth if Wyates frendes them wayle,
The only det that dead or quick may clayme,
That rare wit ſpent, employed to our avayle,
Where Chriſt is taught we led to vertues trayne.
His lively face their breaſtes how did it freat,
Whoſe cyndres yet, with envy they do eate.

Of Sardanapalus diſhonorable life, and miſerable death.

Thassirian king in peace, with foule deſyre,
And filthy luſtes, that ſtaynde his regall hart.
In warre that ſhould ſet princely heartes on fyre,
Did yeld, vanquiſht for want of marcial arte,
The dynt of ſwordes from kiſſes ſemed ſtrange,
And harder, than his ladies ſyde, his targe,
From glutton feaſtes, to ſouldiers fare, a change,
His helmet, farre above a garlandes charge,
Who ſcaſe the name of manhood did retaine,
Drenched in ſlouth, and womanniſh delight,
Feble of ſprite, impacient of payne,
When he had loſt his honour, and his right
Proud time of wealth, in ſtormes appalled with dread,
Murthered himſelfe, to ſhewe ſome manfull dede.

How no age is content with his owne eſtate, and how the age of Children is the happieſt if they had ſtill to underſtand it.

Layd in my quiet bed, in ſtudy as I were
I ſaw within my troubled head, a heap of thoughtes appear,
And every thought did ſhew ſo lyvely in myne eyes,
That now I ſight, and then I ſmilde, as cauſe of thoughts did ryſe.
I ſawe the little boy, in thought how oft that he
Did wiſhe of God, to ſcape the rod, a tall young man to be,
The young man eake that feles his bones with paines oppreſt
How he would be a riche old man, to live and lye at reſt? [fore,
The riche olde man that ſees his end draw on ſo
How he would be a boy againe to live ſo much the more. [three,
Whereat full oft I ſmylde, to ſee how all thoſe
From boy to man, from man to boy, would chop and change degree.
And muſing thus, I think, the caſe is very ſtrange,
That man from wealth, to live in wo, doth ever ſeke to change,
Thus thoughtfull as I lay, I ſawe my withered ſkyn,
How it doth ſhew my dented chewes, the fleſh was worn ſo thin,
And eke my tootheleſs chaps, the gates of my righe way,
That opes and ſhuttes, as I do ſpeak; do thus unto me ſay;
The white and horiſh heres, the meſſengers of age,
That ſhew like lines of true belief, that this life doth aſſuage,
Biddes the lay hand, and feele them hanging on thy chin.
The whiche doth write to ages paſt, the third now coming in, [tyme,
Hang up therefore the bitte, of thy yong wanton
And thou that therein beaten art, the happieſt life defyne: [toye,
Whereat I ſighed, and ſayde, farewell my wonted
Truſſe up thy packe, and trudge from me to every little boy,
And tell them thus from me, their time moſt happy is,
If to theyr time they reaſon had, to know the truth of this.

Bonum eſt mihi quod humiliaſti me.

The ſtormes are paſt, theſe clouds are over blowne,
And humble chere, great vigour hath repreſt,
For the defaulte is ſet apayne for knowne,
And patience graft in a determed breſt.
And in the heart where heapes of griefes were growne
The ſwete revenge has planted mirth and reſt,
No company ſo pleaſant as mine owne,

Thraldom at large, hath made this priſon free,
Danger well paſt remembred workes delight,
Of lingering doubles ſuche hope is ſprong pardie,
That nought I finde diſpleaſant in my ſight,
But when my glaſſe preſented unto me,
The cureleſs wound that bledith day and night,
To think (alas) ſuch hap ſhould graunted be;
Unto a wretch that hath ſo oft been ſhed,
For Britannes ſake (alas) and now is ded.

Exhortation to learne by others trouble.

My Ratclif, when thy recheleſſe youth offendes,
Receive thy ſcourge by others chaſtiſement,
For ſuch calling, when it woorkes none amendes
Then plages are ſent without advertiſement;
Yet Salomon ſayd, the wronged ſhall recure,
But Wyat ſaid true, the ſcarre doth aye endure.

The fanſie of a wearied Lover.

The fanſy, which that I have ſerved long,
That hath alway been enemy to myne eaſe,
Semed of late to rue upon my wrong,
And badde me flye the cauſe of my miſcaſe.
And I furthwith did preaſe out of the throng.
That thought by flight my painfull heart to pleaſe
Some other way, till I ſaw faith more ſtrong,
And to my ſelf I ſaid, alas, thoſe dayes
In vain were ſpent, to runne the race ſo long.
And with that thought, I met my guyde, that plaine,
Out of the way wherein I wandered wrong,
Brought me amiddes the hilles in baſe Bullayne,
Wherein I am now, as reſtleſs to remayn,
Againſt my will, full pleaſed with my payn.

DIDO AND AENEAS GOING TO THE FIELD *;

TRANSLATED FROM THE FOURTH BOOK OF VIRGIL'S ENEIDE.

—At the threſhold of her chamber dore
The Carthage lords did on the quene attend;
The trampling ſteed, with gold and purple trapt,
Chawing the foaming bit ther fercely ſtood.
Then iſſued ſhe, awayted with great train,
Clad in a cloke of Tyre embroider'd rich.
Her quiver hung behind her back, her treſſe
Knotted in gold, her purple veſture eke
Buttned with gold. The Trojans of her train
Before her go, with gladſome Iulus,
Æneas eke, the goodlieſt of the route,
Makes one of them, and joyneth cloſe the throng.
Like when Apollo leaveth Lycia,
His wintring place, and Xanthus' flood likewiſe
To viſit Delos, his mother's manſion,
Repairing eft and furniſhing her quire:
The Candians and the folke of Driopes
With painted Agathyrſies, ſhoute and crye,
Environing the altars round about;
When that he walkes upon Mount Cynthus' top
His ſparkled treſſe repreſt with garlandes ſofte,
Of tender leaves, and truſſed up in golde;
His quivering darts clattering behind his backe.
So freſh and luſtie did Æneas ſeme—
But to the hills and wild holtes when they came,
From the rockes top the driver ſavage roſe.
Loe from the hills above, on thother ſide,
Through the wide lawns thy gan to take their courſe.
The hartes likewiſe, in troops taking their flight,
Rayſing the duſt, the mountain faſt forſake.
The childe Iulus, blithe of his ſwift ſteede
Amids the plain, now pricks by them, now theſe;
And to encounter, wiſheth oft in minde,
The ſoming boar inſteede of fearful beaſts,
Or lion browne, might from the hill deſcend.

DIDO'S PASSION, AND ITS EFFECTES ON THE RYSINGE CITIE,

FROM THE SAME BOOK.

—And when they all were gone,
And the dimme moon doth eſte withold her light;
And ſliding ſtarres provoked unto ſlepe,
Alone ſhe mourns within her palace voide,
And ſits her downe on her forſaken bed:
And abſent him ſhe heares, when he is gone,
And ſeeth eke. Oft in her cuppe ſhe holdes
Aſcanius, trapped by his father's forme.
So to begile the love cannot be told!
The turrettes now arize not, erſt begonne:
Neither the youth welde arms, nor they avance
The portes, nor other mete defence for warr.
Broken there hang the workes, and myhty frame
Of walles high raiſed, thretening the ſkie.

* *This and the two following pieces, are now printed, for the firſt time, among Surrey's Poems.*

Over the tomb of Thomas Clere, Esq., in Lambeth Church, was formerly a tablet with the following epitaph, written by the Earl of Surrey.

EPITAPHIUM THOMÆ CLERE, qui fato functus est 1545, auctore Henrico Howard comite Surrienſi, in cujus felicis ingenii ſpecimen & ſingularis facundiæ argumentum appenſa fuit, hæc tabula per W. Howard, filium Thomæ nuper Ducis Norf. filii ejuſdem Henrici comitis Surrienſis.

Norfolke ſprung thee, Lambeth holds thee dead,
Clere of the Count of Cleremont thou hight,
Within the womb of Ormond's race thou bred,
And ſaweſt thy coſin crowned in thy ſight;
Shelton for love, Surrey for Lord thou chaſe,
Aye me while life did laſt that league was tender
Tracing whoſe ſteps thou ſaweſt Kelſall blaze,
Launderſey burnt and batter'd Bulleyn's render,
At Muttrell gates hopeleſs of all recure
Thine Earl half dead, gave in thy hand his will,
Which cauſe did thee this pining death procure
Ere ſummers four times ſeven thou couldſt fulfill
Aye Clere, if love had booted care or coſt
Heaven had not wonne, nor earth ſo timely loſt.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

SIR THOMAS WYAT.

Containing his

SONNETS, | IMITATIONS,
EPISTLES, | TRANSLATIONS,

&c. &c. &c.

To which is prefixed

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

They with the Muſes who converſed, were
That princely SURREY, early in the time
Of the Eight Henry, who was then the prime
Of England's noble youth. With him there came
WYAT, with reverence whom we ſtill do name
Amongſt our poets: BRYAN had a ſhare
With the two former, which accounted are
The time's beſt makers, and the authors were
Of thoſe ſmall poems which the title bear
Of *Songes and Sonnettes*, wherein oft they hit
On many dainty paſſages of wit.

DRAYTON'S ELEGY TO REYNOLDS.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY *MUNDELL AND SON*, ROYAL BANK CLOSE,

Anno 1793.

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THE LIFE OF WYAT.

Sir Thomas Wyat was the ſon of Henry Wyat, Eſq. of Allington Caſtle, in Kent, where he was born, in the year 1503. He is commonly called the elder, to diſtinguiſh him from his ſon, of the ſame name, who raiſed a rebellion in the reign of Queen Mary.

He received the rudiments of his education at Cambridge, and afterwards went to Oxford, where he completed his ſtudies: But his chief and moſt ſplendid accompliſhments were derived from his travels into various parts of Europe, which he frequently viſited in the quality of an envoy.

He was the contemporary and friend of the accompliſhed and high-ſpirited Earl of Surrey. A ſimilarity, or rather fameneſs of taſte and of purſuits, as it is a proof, ſo perhaps it was the chief cement of that inviolable friendſhip which ſubſiſted between them.

His wit and popular accompliſhments rendered him one of the brilliant ornaments of the court of King Henry the Eighth, which at leaſt affected to be polite; and as Henry did not always act from cruelty and caprice, he was endeared to him, for his fidelity and ſucceſs in the execution of public buſineſs, his ſkill in arms, literature, familiarity with languages, and lively converſation.

Wood, who degrades every thing by poverty of ſtyle, ſays, that "the king was in a high manner delighted with his *witty jeſts*." He is reported to have occaſioned the Reformation by a joke, and to have planned the fall of Cardinal Wolſey by a ſeaſonable ſtory.

But he had almoſt loſt his popularity, either from an intimacy with Queen Anne Boleyn, which was called a connection, or the gloomy cabals of Biſhop Bonner, who could not bear his political ſuperiority.

Yet his prudence and integrity, no leſs than the powers of his oratory, juſtified his innocence. He laments his ſevere and unjuſt impriſonment, on that occaſion, in a ſonnet addreſſed to the brave and accompliſhed Sir Francis Bryan; inſinuating his ſolicitude, that although the wound would be healed, the ſcar would remain; and that to be acquitted of the accuſation, would avail but little, while the thoughts of having been accuſed were ſtill freſh in his remembrance.

He recovered his liberty and the king's favour, and was wiſe enough not to interrupt his pleaſures, his convenience, or his ambition; but ſpent much of his time at Allington Caſtle, which he magnificently repaired "for the reception," ſays Jacob, "of one of his noble ſpirit and refined taſte of life; which were more ſuperior to his anceſtors than his ſtately manſion, by the coſtly reparations, exceeded the ancient ſtructure."

In one of his *epiſtles to Poinez*, on the life of a courtier, his execration of flatterers and courtiers is contraſted with an entertaining picture of his own private life and rural enjoyments at Allington Caſtle.

This is the cauſe that I could never yet
Hang on their ſleeves, that weigh, as thou maiſt ſee,
A chip of chaunce more than a pound of wit;
This maketh me at home to hunt and hawke,
And in fowle wether at my booke to ſit;
In froſt and ſnowe then with my bow to ſtalke;
No man doth marke whereſo I ride or go;
In luſty leas at liberty I walke:
And of theſe newes I fele no weale nor woe,
Save that a clogge doth hang yet at my heſe;
No forſe for that, for it is ordered ſo,
That I may leape both hedge and dike ful wele.

I am not now in Fraunce, to judge the wine, &c.
But I am here in Kent and Chriſtendome,
Among the muſes, where I reade and rime.

The "clogge" he complains of, probably alludes to ſome office which he ſtill held at court, and which ſometimes recalled him, but not too frequently, from the country.

It is a common miſtake of his biographers, that he died abroad of the plague, in an embaſſy to Charles the Fifth. Being ſent to conduct that emperor's embaſſador from Falmouth to London, from too eager and a needleſs deſire of executing his commiſſion with diſpatch and punctuality, he caught a fever, by riding in a hot day; and in his return, died on the road at Sherborn, in the year 1541, in the 38th year of his age; and was buried in the great abbey church of that place.

The next year, Leland publiſhed a book of Latin verſes on his death, intitled, *Næniæ in mortem T. Viati*, with a wooden print of his head, after a painting of Holbein, and the following elegant inſcription under the head:

Holbenus nitida pingendi maximus arte,
Effigiem expreſſit graphice, ſed nullus Apelles
Exprimet ingenium felix, animumque *Viati*.

His poems were printed by Tottell, in his editions of Surrey's poems, of 1559 and 1565, under the title of *the Songes and Sonnettes of ir Thomas Wyat the elder*, and reprinted, with the poems of Surrey, by Dr. Sewel, in 1717; and are now admitted, for the firſt time, into a collection of claſſical Engliſh poetry.

The poetical pieces of Wyat, and his friend Surrey, were in high reputation with their contemporaries, and for many years afterwards. They are thus characteriſed by Puttenham, the author of the old "Art of Engliſh Poeſie," whoſe opinion remained long as a rule of criticiſm: "In the latter end of the ſame kinge's (Henry's) raigne, ſpronge up a new company of wit makers, of whom Sir Thomas Wyat the elder, and Henry Earle of Surrey, were the two *chieftaines*; who having travailed into Italie, and there taſted the ſweete and ſtately meaſures and ſtyle of the Italian poeſie, as noviſes newly crept out of the ſchooles of Dante, Arioſto, and Petrarch, they greatly poliſhed our rude and homely manner of vulgar poeſie from that it had been before, and for that cauſe may juſtly be ſayd the firſt reformers of our Engliſh meetre and ſtyle." And again, "Henry Earl of Surrey, and Sir Thomas Wyat, between whom I find very little difference, I repute them (as before) for the two chief lanternes of light to all others that have ſince employed their pennes upon Engliſh poeſie: Their conceits were lofty, their ſtyles ſtately, their conveyance cleanly, their terms proper, their meetre ſweet, and well proportioned; in all, imitating very naturally and ſtudiouſly their maiſter, Francis Petrarch" P. 48—50. Edit. 1589.

Leland is laviſh in his praiſe, and ſcruples not to compare him to Dante and Petrarch:

Let Florence fair her *Dante* juſtly boaſt,
And royal Rome her *Petrarch's* number'd feet;
In *Engliſh Wyat*, both of them doth coaſt,
In whom all graceful eloquence doth meet.

In Surrey's elegy on the death of Wyat, his character is delineated in the following nervous and manly quatraines:

A viſage ſterne and mild, where both did growe;
Vice to contemne, in vertue to rejoyce;
Amid great ſtormes, whom grace aſſured ſo
To live upright, and ſmile at fortune's choyce.

A lering that ſerved in forein realmes his king,
Whoſe courteous talk to vertue did enflame
Eche noble heart; a worthy guide to bring
Our Engliſh youth by travail unto fame;

An eye, whoſe judgment none affect could blind;
Friend to allure, and foes to reconcile;
Whoſe perſing look did repreſent a minde
With virtue fraught, repoſed, void of gile.

A hart, where dreade was never ſo impreſt
To hide the thought that might the truth advance;
In neither fortune loſt, nor yet repreſt,
To ſwell in welth, or yeld unto miſchance —

Thy fame, great Wyat, ſhall by all be read;
What vertues rare were temper'd in thy breaſt!
Honour that England ſuch a jewel bred,
And kiſs the ground whereon thy corpſe did reſt.

It will be ſuperfluous to tranſcribe the panegyrics of his contemporaries, after this encomium of Surrey, in which his amiable character owes more to truth than to the graces of poetry, or to the flattery of friendſhip.

It is mentioned, to his honour, by Puttenham, that he co-operated with Surrey in correcting the roughneſs of our poetic ſtyle. He certainly deſerves equally of poſterity with Surrey for the diligence with which he cultivated elegant literature. But in his poetical capacity, he ſeems to have wanted the judgment of his friend Surrey, who, in imitating Petrarch, reſiſted the contagion of his conceits. He has more imitations, and even tranſlations from the Italian poets, than Surrey; and he ſeems to have been more fond of their conceits. He is confeſſedly inferior to him in harmony of numbers, perſpicuity of expreſſion, and facility of phraſeology. Nor is he equal to him in elegance of ſentiment, in nature and ſenſibility. His feelings are diſguiſed by affectation, and obſcured by fantaſtic incongruities. His declarations of paſſion are embarraſſed by wit and fancy; and his ſtyle is not intelligible, in proportion as it is careleſs and unadorned.

His chief merit is of the moral and didactic kind. His poems abound more in good ſenſe, ſatire, and obſervations on life, than in pathos and imagination. Yet there is a degree of lyric ſweetneſs in the lines to his lute, in which *the lover complaineth the unkindneſs of his love*; and in the little ode, or rather epigram on his return from Spain into England, there is great ſimplicity and propriety, together with a ſtrain of poetic alluſion. In the ſatiric vein of his *epiſtles to Poines and Bryan*, there is much of the familiar elegance of Horace; a ſtyle of writing which Cowper has caught with great ſucceſs, in his "Table Talk," &c. &c.

Among Wyat's poems, is an unfiniſhed tranſlation, in Alexandrian verſe, of the ſong of Jopas, in the firſt book of Virgil's Æneid. Wyat's and Surrey's verſions from Virgil are the firſt regular tranſlations in Engliſh of an ancient claſſical poet. A verſion of David's Pſalms, by Wyat, is highly exulted by Surrey and Leland. But Wyat's verſion of the *Penitential Pſalms*, ſeems to be a ſeparate work from his tranſlation of the whole pſaltery; and probably that which is praiſed by Surrey, in the ode, intituled, *Praiſe of certaine Pſalmes of David, tranſlated by Sir Thomas Wyat the elder*. They were printed in 1549. But this verſion, with that of Surrey, mentioned in his life, is now loſt. The character of Wyat has received every poſſible illuſtration from Lord Orford and Mr. Warton; after whoſe diſcriminating touches, every ſtroke from a caſual hand muſt ſerve rather to injure than improve the likeneſs.

"It was from the capricious and over-ſtrained invention of the Italian poets," ſays Mr. Warton, "that Wyat was taught to torture the paſſion of love, by prolix and intricate compariſons, and unnatural alluſions. I am of opinion, that he miſtook his talents, when in compliance with the mode, he be-

came a ſonnetteer; and, if we may judge from a few inſtances, that he was likely to treat any other ſubject with more ſucceſs than that of love. His abilities were ſeduced and miſapplied, in fabricating fine ſpeeches to an obdurate miſtreſs. He appears a much more pleaſing writer, when he moraliſes on the felicities of retirement, and attacks the vanities and vices of a court, with the honeſt indignation of an independent philoſopher, and the freedom and pleaſantry of Horace. Three of his epiſtles are profeſſedly written in this ſtrain; and we muſt regret, that he has not left more pieces in a ſtyle of compoſition for which he ſeems to have been eminently qualified."

To the poems of Surrey and Wyat, are annexed, in Tottell's edition, thoſe of *Uncertaine Auctours*. Many of theſe pieces are much in the manner of Surrey and Wyat, which was the faſhion of the times. They are all anonymous; but probably Sir Francis Bryan, George Boleyn Earl of Rochford, and Lord Vaux, contemporary rhymers and ſonnetteers, were large contributers. Two of them, intituled, *The Aged Lover renounceth Love*, in which are three ſtanzas of the grave-digger's ſong in Shakeſpear's Hamlet, and *The Aſſaulte of Cupide*, &c. are the undoubted production of Lord Vaux; "a man of marvellous facility in vulgar making."

The merit of ſome of thoſe pieces is ſo conſiderable, as to juſtify a ſelection; and the reader owes to the compiler of theſe narratives, whatever pleaſure or diſguſt he may have in finding a ſpecimen of the firſt printed poetical miſcellany in the Engliſh language in this collection.

What has pleaſed himſelf, he has undertaken to recommend to others; and as ſenſe and genius are not wanting in the pieces he has endeavoured to preſerve, it will not be ſo much the fault of the writers, as of the the language, if they are not read with pleaſure.

The ſtanzas, intituled, *A Praiſe of his Ladie*, have that elegance which reſults from ſimplicity. The thoughts ſupport themſelves, without the affectations of language; and the compliments are ſuch as would not diſgrace the gallantry or the poetry of a poliſhed age. Puttenham ſpeaks highly of the "counterfait action" in Lord Vaux's *Aſſaulte of Cupide*; but there is more poetry in ſome of the old pageants, than in the contrivance of the allegory of this piece. In the little ode intitled *of his miſtreſs M. B.* much pretty deſcription and imagination is built on the circumſtance of a lady being named Bayes. *Harpalus's complaint of Philtidae's love beſtowed on Corin*, is perhaps the firſt example in our language now remaining of the pure unmixed paſtoral; and for eaſe of numbers, elegance of rural alluſion, and ſimplicity of imagery, excells every thing of the kind in Spenſer, who is erroneouſly ranked as our earlieſt Engliſh bucolic. In the poem, intituled, *That all things ſometime finde eaſe of their paine, ſave only the lover*, ſome of the ſtanzas deſerve attention for their ſimple beauty and native force of expreſſion. In the ode, in which *The lover in deſpair lamenteth his caſe*, there is more pathos and feeling than in any other piece of the whole collection. The epigram, *Of a new married ſtudent*, who was purſuing his ſtudies ſucceſsfully, but in the midſt of his literary career, married unfortunately, contains a general joke on an unhappy match. It is, perhaps, the firſt pointed epigram in the Engliſh language; and may have fallen from the pen of Sir Thomas More, one of the beſt jokers of that age. In the elegant little ode, intituled, *The Lover that once diſdained love*, &c. are the two lines ſaid to be written by Mary Queen of Scots, in a window, at Fotheringay caſtle.

From the toppe of all my truſt,
Miſhap hath throwen me in the duſt.

The unfortunate queen only quoted a diſtich applicable to her ſituation, which ſhe remembered in a faſhionable collection of poems, perhaps the amuſement of her youth. With the *Songes and Sonnettes of Uncertain Auctours*, the original editor has printed *Songes written by N. G.*, the initials of Nicholas Grimoald, who is the ſecond Engliſh poet after Surrey that wrote in blank verſe; to which he added new ſtrength, elegance, and modulation. As a writer of verſe in rhyme he yields to none of his contemporaries, for a maſterly choice of chaſte expreſſion, and the conciſe elegancies of didactic verſification. His poem in *Praiſe of Meaſure keeping* has all the ſmartneſs which belongs to the modern ſtyle of ſententious poetry. The ſtanzas *on the Nine Muſes* are more poetical, and not leſs correct. His poems *on the Death of Cicero*, and *the Death of Zoroas*, are impregnated almoſt throughout by a warmth of imagination, and the ſpirit of pathetic poetry.

It would be unpardonable to diſmiſs the poetical works of Wyat unaccompanied by thoſe admirable ſpecimens of ancient genius, for which Engliſh literature is highly indebted to Richard Tottell, who, at a critical period, collected and preſerved them from the general depredations of time, in a printed volume.

SONGES AND SONETTES.

The lover for ſhamefaſtneſſe hideth his deſire within his faithful heart.

The long love, that in my thought I harber
And in my heart doth kepe his reſidence,
Into my face preaſeth with bold pretence,
And there campeth, diſplaying his banner;
She that me learnes to love, and to ſuffer,
And willes that my truſt and luſtes negligence
Be reyned by reaſon, ſhame, and reverence
With his hardineſſe takes diſpleaſure,
Wherewith love to the hartes foreſt he fleeth,
Leaving his enterpriſe with paine and crye,
And there him hideth and not appeareth,
What may I do? when my maiſter feareth,
But in the field with him to live and dye,
For good is the lyfe, ending faithfully.

The lover waxeth wyſer, and will not dye for affection.

Yet was I never of your love agreved,
Nor never ſhall, whyle that my life doth laſt;
But of hating my ſelf, that date is paſt,
And tears continual ſore hath me weried:
I will not yet in my greave be buried,
Nor on my tombe your name have fixed faſt,
As cruel cauſe, that did my ſprite ſoon haſt,
From th' unhappie bones by great ſyghes ſtyred;
Then if an heart of amorous faith and will
Content your mind withouten doing grief,
Pleaſe it you ſo to this to do relief,
If otherwyſe you ſeke for to fulfyll
Your wrath, you erre, and ſhal not as you wene,
And you your ſelf the cauſe thereof have bene.

The abuſed lover ſeeth his foly, and intendeth to truſt no more.

Was never fyle yet half ſo well yfyled,
To fyle a fyle for any ſmithes entent,
As I was made a fyling inſtrument,
To frame other, while that I was begyled,
But reaſon loe, hath at my foly ſmyled,
And pardoned me, ſins that I me repent,
Of my laſt yeres, and of my tyme miſpent.
For youth led me, and falſhod me miſguyded,
Yet, this truſt I have of great appearance,
Sins that deceyt is aye returnable,
Of very force it is agreable,
That therewithall be done the recompence,
Then gyle begiled, plain'd ſhould be never
And the reward is little truſt for ever.

The lover deſcribeth his being ſtriken with ſight of his love.

The lively ſparkes, that iſſue from thoſe eyes,
Againſt the which there vaileth no defence,
Have perſt my hart, and done it none offence,
With quaking pleaſure, more than once or twiſe
Was never man could any thing devyſe,
Sunne beames to turne with ſo great vehemence
To daſe mans ſight, as by their bright preſence
Daſed am I, much lyke unto the gyſe,
Of one ſtriken with dint of lightening,
Blind with the ſtroke, and crying here and there;
So call I for help, I not when or where,
The payn of my fall paciently bearing;
For ſtreight after the blaſe (as is no wonder)
Of deadly noyſe heare I the fearfull thunder.

The wavering lover willeth and dreadeth to move his deſire.

Such vayn thought, as wonted to miſlead me
In deſert hope by well aſſured mone,
Makes me from company to live alone,
In following her, whom reaſon biddes me flee,
And after her my heart would fain be gone,
But armed ſighes my way do ſtop anone,
Twixt hope and dreade locking my libertie,
So fleeth ſhe by gentle crueltie,
Yet as I geaſſe under diſdainfull brow,
One beam of truthe is in her cloudy looke,
Which comforts the mind, that earſt for fear ſhooke
That boldeſt ſtrayght, the way then ſeeke I how
To utter forth the ſmart I hyde within,
But ſuch it is, I not how to begin.

The lover having dreamed enjoying of his love, complaineth that the dreame is not either longer or truer.

Unstable dreame according to the place,
Be ſtedfaſt ones, or els at leaſt be true,
By taſted ſweetneſſe, make me not to rew,
By good reſpect in ſuch a dangerous caſe.
Thou broughteſt not her into theſe toſſing ſeas,
But madeſt my ſpirit to live, my care tencreaſe,
My body in tempeſt her delight tembrace,
The body dead, the ſpryte had his deſire,
Painleſſe was th' one, the other in delight,
Why then, alas! did it not kepe it right,
But thus returne to leape into the fyer.
And where it was at wiſh, could not remaine,
Such mockes of dreames do turn to deadly payne,

The lover unhappy, biddeth happy lovers rejoice in May, while he wayleth that month to him moſt unluckely.

Ye that in love find lucke and ſwete abundance,
And live in luſt of joyful jolitie,
Aryſe for ſhame, do way your ſluggardy,
Ariſe, I ſay, do May ſome obſervance,
Let me in beds lye dreaming of miſchaunce,
Let me remember my miſhappes unhappy,
That me betide in May moſt commonly.
As one whonſe love liſt little to advance.
Stephan ſaid true, that my nativitie
Miſthaunted was with the ruler of May:
He geſt (I prove) of that the veritie
In May welth, and eke my wittes, I ſay,
Have ſtand ſo oft in ſuch perplexitie,
Joy, let me dreame of your felicitie.

The lover confeſſeth himſelf in love with Phillis.

If waker care, if ſodayne pale colour,
If many ſighes with little ſpeeche to plaine,
Now joy, now wo, if they my chere diſtaine,
For hope of ſmal, if much to fear therefore,
To haſt or ſlacke, my pace to leſſe or more
Be ſygne do love, then to I love againe:
If thou aſke whome, ſure ſyns I did refraine,
Brunet that ſet my welth in ſuch a rore;
Th' unfained chere of Phyllis hath the place
That Brunet had, ſhe hath and ever ſhall,
She from my ſelf now hath me in her grace,
She hath in hand my wit, my will and all.
My heart alone wel woorthy ſhe doth ſtay,
Without whoſe helpe ſkant do I live a day.

Of others fained ſorrow, and the lovers fained mirth.

Cesar when that the traitour of Egipt
With t' honourable head did him preſent
Covering his hearties gladneſſe, did repreſent
Playne with his teares outward, as it is writ,
Eke Hanniball, when fortune him out thit
Clene from his reigne, and all his entent,
Laught to his folke, whom ſorow did torment;
His cruel diſpite for to diſgorge and quit,
So chaunced me, that every paſſion
The mynd hydeth by colour contrary,
With fained viſage, now ſad, now wery,
Whereby if that I laugh at any ſeaſon,
It is becauſe I have none other way
To cloake my care, but under ſporte and play.

Of change in minde.

Eche man me tel'th, I change moſt my deviſe,
And on my faith, methinke it good reaſon;
To chaunge purpoſe, like after the ſeaſon,
For in eche caſe to kepe ſtill one guiſe,
Is mete for them, that would be taken wyſe,
And I am not of ſuch maner condicion,
But treated after a divers faſhion,
And thereupon my diverſeneſſe doth ryſe,
But you this diverſeneſſe that blamen moſt,
Change you no more, but ſtill after one rate,
Treate you me welle, and kepe you in that ſtate,
And while with me doth dwell this weried ghoſt,
My woord nor I ſhall not be variable,
But always one, your own both firm and ſtable.

How the lover periſheth in his delight, as the fyze in the fier.

Some fowles there be that have no perfite ſight,
Againſt the ſunne their eyes for to defend,
And ſome becauſe the light doth them offend,
Never appere, but in the darke or night:
Others rejoyce, to ſee the fire ſo bright,
And wene to play in it, as they pretend,
But fynd contrary of it, as they entende,
Alas of that ſort, may I be by right.
For to withſtand her looke I am not able,
Yet can I not hyde me in no darke place,
So followeth me remembrance of that face;
That with my teary eyen, ſwolne, and waſtable,
My deſteny to behold her doth me leade,
And yet I know I runne into the glead.

Againſt his tong that failed to utter his ſuites.

Because I ſtill kept thee fro lyes and blame,
And to my power alwayes the honowred,
Unkind tongue, to yll haſt thou me rendred,
For ſuch deſert to do me wreke and ſhame.
In nede of ſuccour moſt when that I am
To aſk he rewarde, thou ſtandes lyke one afrayde,
Alway moſt cold; and if one word be ſayd,
As in a dreame, unperfit is the ſame;
And ye ſalt teares, againſt my will each night,
That are with me when I would be alone,

Then are ye gone, when I ſhould make my mone,
And ye ſo ready ſighes, to make me ſhright,
Then are ye ſlacke, when that ye ſhoulde outſtart,
And only doth my loke declare my hart.

Deſcription of the contrarious paſſions in a lover.

I FINDE no peace, and all my warre is done,
I feare and hope, I burne, and freſe lyke yſe,
I flye aloft, yet can I not aryſe,
And nought I have, and all the world I ſeaſon,
That lockes nor loſeth, holdeth me in priſon,
And holdes me not, yet can I ſcape no wyſe,
Nor lettes me live, nor dye at my devyſe,
And yet of death it geveth me occaſion,
Without eye I ſee, without tongue I playne,
I wiſh to periſh, yet I aſk for health,
I love another, and I hate my ſelfe,
I fede me in ſorow, and laugh in all my payne.
Lo, thus diſpleaſeth me, both death and life,
And my delight is cauſer of this ſtriſe.

The lover compareth his ſtate to a ſhippe in perilous ſtorme toſſed on the ſea.

MY gally charged with forgetfulneſſe,
Through ſharpe ſeas, in winter nightes doth paſſe,
Twene rocke, and rocke, and eke my foe (alas)
That is my lord, ſtereth with cruelneſſe.
And every houre, a thought in readineſſe,
As though that death wer light in ſuch a caſe,
And endleſſe wynde doth teare the ſayle apace
Of forced ſighes and truſty fearfulneſſe:
A rayne of teares, a cloude of dark diſdayne,
Have done the weried coardes great hinderance;
Wretched with errour, and with ignorance,
The ſtarres be hidde, that lead me to this payne.
Drounde is reaſon that ſhoulde be my comforte,
And I remayne, diſparing of the porte.

Of doubtful love.

AVYSING the bright beames of thoſe fayre eyes,
Where he abides that mine oft moyſtes and waſheth
The wearied mynde ſtreight from the heart departeth,
To reſt within his worldly paradyſe;
And bitter findes the ſwete, under his gyſe,
What webbes there he hath wrought, well he perceiveth,
Wherby then with hymſelfe on love he playneth,
That ſpurs with fyre, and brydleth eke with yſe:
In ſuch extremitie thus is he brought,
Frozen now cold, and now he ſtandes in flame,
Twixt wo and wealth, betwixt earneſt and gaine,
With feldome glad, and many a divers thought;
In ſore repentance of his hardineſſe,
Of ſuch a roote loe commeth frute fruteleſſe.

The lover ſheweth how he is forſaken of ſuch as he ſometime enjoyed.

THEY flee from me, that ſometime did me ſeke,
With naked fote ſtalking within my chamber,
Once have I ſene them gentle, tame, and meke,
That now are wyld, and do not once remember.
That ſometime they have put themſelves in danger,
To take bread at my hand, and now they range,
Buſely ſeking in continual change.
Thanked be fortune, it hath been otherwyſe,
Twenty tymes better, but once eſpeciall,
In thine aray, after a pleaſaunt gyſe,
When her looſe gowne did from her ſhoulders fall,
And ſhe me caught in her armes long and ſmall;
And therwithall, ſo ſwetely did me kyſſe,
And ſoftly ſayd, dear hearte, how like you this?
It was no dreame, for I lay brode awaking.
But all is turned now through my gentleneſſe,
Into a bitter faſhion of forſaking,
And I have leave to goe of her goodneſſe;
And ſhe alſo to uſe new fangleneſſe.
But, ſyns that I unkendly ſo am ſerved,
How like you this, what hath ſhe now deſerved?

The Lady to aunſwere directly with yea or nay.

MADAME, withouten many woordes,
Once I am ſure, you will, or no:
And if you will, then leave your boordes,
And uſe your wit, and ſhew it ſo.
For with a beck you ſhall me call,
And if of one, that burnes alwaye,
Ye have pitie, or ruth at all,
Aunſwere him faire with ye or nay,
If it be nay, frendes as before,
You ſhall an other man obtayne,
And I myne own, and yours no more.

To his love whom he had kiſſed againſt her will.

ALAS, madame, for ſtealing of a kiſſe,
Have I ſo much your mind therin offended?
Or have I done ſo grievouſly amiſſe,
That by no meenes it may not be amended?
Revenge you then, the readieſt way is this,
Another kiſſe my life it ſhall have ended,
For, to my mouth the firſt my hart did ſucke,
The next ſhall cleane out of my breſt it plucke.

Of the jealous man that loved the ſame women, and eſpied this other ſitting with her.

THE wandering gadling in the ſommer tyde,
That findes the adder with his rechles foote,
Startes not diſmayde ſo ſodenly aſyde,
As jealous deſpite did, though ther wer no boote

When that he ſaw me ſitting by her ſyde,
That of my health is very crop and roote.
It pleaſed me then to have ſo faire a grace,
To ſting the hart, that would have had my place.

To his love from whom he had his gloves.

WHAT nedes theſe threatning wordes, and waſted winde:
Al this cannot make me reſtore my pray,
To robbe your good, ywis is not my mynde,
Nor cauſeleſſe your fair hand did I diſplay,
Let love be judge, or els whom next we finde,
That may both heare what you and I can ſay,
She reft my hart. and I a glove from her,
Let us ſee then, if one be worth the other.

Of the faigned frend.

RYGHT true it is, and ſayd full yore ago,
Take hede of him that by the back thee claweth:
For none is worſe than is a frendly ſo,
Though thee ſeme good, all thing that the deliteth,
Yet know it well, that in thy boſome crepeth,
For many a man ſuch fire oft times he kindleth,
That with the blaſe his beard himſelf he ſingeth.

The lover taught, miſtruſteth allurements.

IT may be good, lyke it who liſt,
But I do doubt who can me blame?
For oft aſſured, yet have I miſt,
And now again I fear the ſame:
The woordes, that from your mouth laſt came,
Of ſodeyn change make me agaſt,
For dread to fall, I ſtand not faſt.
Alas! I tread an endleſs maſe,
That ſeke t' accord two contraries,
And hope thus ſtill, and nothing haſe,
Impriſoned in liberties,
As one unheard, and ſtill that cries,
Always thirſty, and nought doth taſte,
For dread to fall I ſtand not faſt.
Aſſured I doubt I be not ſure,
Should I then truſt unto ſuch ſurety,
That oft hath put the proſe in ure
And never yet have found it truſtie.
Nay, for in fayth, it were great folly,
And yet my life thus do I waſt,
For dread to fall I ſtand not faſt.

The lover complaineth that his love doth not pitie him.

RESOUND my voyce ye woods, me heare me plain,
Both hils and vales cauſing reflection,
And rivers eke, record ye of my payne,
Which have oft forced ye by compaſſion,
As judges lo to hear my exclamacion,
Among whom ruth (I finde) ye doth remayne,
Where I it ſeke, alas! there is diſdayne.
Oft ye rivers, to heare my wofull ſound,
Have ſtopt your cours, and playnly to expreſſe,
Many a teare by moyſture of the ground,
The earth hath wept to hear my heavineſſe,
Which cauſeleſſe I endure without redreſſe,
The hugy okes have roared in the wynde,
Eche thing me thought, complayning in their kind.
Why then alas! doth not ſhe on me rue,
Or is her heart ſo hard, that no pittie
May in it ſinke, my joy for to renew;
O ſtony hart, who hath thus framed thee
So cruel, that art cloked with beauty,
That from thee may no grace to me proceede,
But as reward, death for to be my mede.

The lover rejoyſith againſt fortune, that by hindering his ſuite had happely made him forſake his folly.

IN faith I wote not what to ſay,
Thy chaunces been ſo wonderous,
Thou fortune with thy divers play,
That makeſt the joyfull dolorous.
Yet though thy chaine hath me enwrapt,
Spyte of thy hap, hap hath well hapt,
Though thou haſt ſet me for a wonder,
And ſekeſt by change to do me payne,
Mens myndes yet mayſt thou not ſo order,
For honeſtie if it remayne,
Shall ſhine for al thy cloudy rayne;
In vayne thou ſekeſt to have me trapt,
Spyte of thy hap, hap hath well hapt.
In hindering me, me didſt thou furthur,
And made a gap, where was a ſtyle,
Cruel wiles been oft put under,
Wening to lower, then didſt thou ſmyle.
Lord, how thy ſelf thou didſt begyle,
That in thy cares would have me wrapt,
But ſpyte of hap, hap hath well hapt.

A renouncing of hardelie eſcaped love.

FAREWELL the hard of cruelty,
Though that with pain my liberty,
Dear have I bought, and wofully,
Finiſht my fearefull tragedy.
Of force I muſt forſake ſuch pleaſure,
A good cauſe juſt, ſins I endure,
Therby my wo, which be ye ſure,
Shall therwith go me to recure.
I fare as one eſcapt that ſleeth,
Glad he is gone, and yet ſtyll feareth,
Spied to be caught and ſo dredeth
That he for nought his pain leſeth
In joyfull payn, rejoyce my hart,
Thus to ſuſtayn of eche a part.
Let not this ſong from thee aſtart,
Welcome among my pleaſant ſmart.

The lover to his bed, with describing of his unquiet state.

THE reſtfull place, reuuer of my ſmart,
The labours ſalve encreaſing my ſorow,
The bodies eaſe, and troubler of my hart,
Quieter of minde, myne unquiet foe,
Forgeatter of payne, rememberer of my woe,
The place of ſlepe, wherein I do but wake,
Beſprent with teares, my bed, I the forſake,
The frosty ſnowes may not redreſs my heate,
Nor, theate of ſunne abate my fervent cold,
I know nothing to eaſe my paine ſo great
Eche cure cauſeth encreaſe by twenty fold,
Renewing cares upon my ſorrows old,
Such overthwart effectes in me they make,
Beſprent with teares, my bed for to forſake.
But all for nought, I find no better eaſe,
In bed or out, this moſt cauſeth my paine,
Where do I ſeek how beſt that I may pleaſe,
My loſt labour (alas) is all in vayn,
My heart once ſet, I cannot it refrayne,
No place from me my grief away can take,
Wherefore with teares, my bed I thee forſake.

Comparifon of love, to a ſtreame falling from the Alps.

FROM theſe hye hilles as when a ſpring doth fall,
It trilleth downe with ſtill and ſattle courſe,
Of this and that, it gathers aye and ſhall,
Till it have juſt downe flowed to ſtreame and force,
Then at the foote it rageth over all:
So fareth love, when he hath tane a courſe,
Rage is his rayne, reſiſtance vayleth none,
The firſt eſchue is remedy alone.

Wyates complaint upon love to reaſon, with loves anſwere.

MYNE old dere enmy, my froward maiſter,
A fore that quene, I cauſde to be acyted,
Which holdeth the divine part of our nature,
That like as golde, in fyre he mought be tryed.
Charged with a dolour, there I me preſented
With horrible feare, as one that greatly dreadeth
A wrongfull death, and juſtice alway ſeketh.
And thus I ſay'd: Once my left foote, madame,
When I was yong, I ſet within his raigne;
Whereby other then fyrely burning flame,
I never felt, but many a grievous payne,
Torment I ſuffred anger and diſdayne:
That mine oppreſſed pacience was paſt,
And I mine owne life hated at the laſt.
Thus hitherto have I my tyme paſſed
In paine and ſmart, what wayes is profitable,
How many pleaſant dayes have me eſcaped,
In ſerving this falſe lyer ſo deceivable?
What wit have wordes ſo preſt and forceable,
That may containe my great miſhappineſſe,
And juſt complaintes of his ungentleneſſe?
So ſmall hony, much aloes, and gall,
In bitterneſſe, my blinde life hath ytaſted
His falſe ſemblance, that turneth as a ball,
With fair and amorous daunce, made me be traced,
And where I had my thought and minde araced,
From earthly fraylneſſe, and from vaine pleaſure,
Me from my reſt he tooke and ſet in errour.
God made he me regardleſſe, than I ought,
And to my ſelfe to take right little hede:
And for a woman have I ſet at nought,
Al other thoughtes, in this only to ſpede,
And he was onely counſeler of this dede.
Whetting alwayes my youthly fraile deſyre,
On cruel whetſtone, tempered with fire.
But (oh alas!) where had I ever wit?
Or other gift geven to me of nature?
That ſooner ſhal be changed my weried ſprite,
Then the obſtinate will, that is my ruler,
So robbeth he my fredome with diſpleaſure,
This wicked traytour, whom I thus accuſe,
That bitter life hath turned in pleaſant uſe.
He hath me haſted, through divers regions,
Through deſert woodes, and ſharpe by mountaines,
Through froward people, and through bitter paſſions,
Through rocky ſeas, and over hilles and plaines:
With wery travel, and with laborous paynes,
Alwayes in trouble and in tediouſneſſe,
All in errour, and daungerous diſtreſſe.
But nother he, nor ſhe, my tother foe,
For all my flight did ever me forſake;
That though my timely death hath been to ſlowe
That me as yet, it hath not overtake:
The heavenly gods of pitie doe it ſlake,
And note they this his cruell tyranny,
That feedes him, with my care, and miſery.
Sins I was his, hower reſted I never,
Nor looke to doe, and eke the waky nightes,
The baniſhed ſlepe may in no wiſe recover.
By guyle and force, over my thralled ſpites
He is ruler, ſins which bell never ſtrikes,
That I hear not as ſounding to renue
My plaintes. Himſelf he knoweth that I ſay true.
For never woormes old rotten ſtocke have eaten,
As he my hart, where he is reſident,
And doth the ſame with death daily threaten.
Thence come the teares, and thence the bitter torment,
The ſighes, the woordes and eke the languiſhment,
That noy both me, and paraventure other,
Judge thou that knoweſt the one and eke the other.
Mine adverſarie with ſuch grevous reproofe,
Thus he began, Hear lady the other part:
That the plain trouth, from which he draweth aloofe,
This unkind man may ſhew, ere that I part,
In his yong age, I tooke him from that art,
That felleth woordes, and make clattering knight,
And of my wealth I gave him the delight.
Now ſhames he not on me for to complaine,
That held him evermore in pleaſant gayne,
From his deſire that might have been his payne,
Yet therby alone I brought him to ſome frame,
Which now as wretchednes, he doth ſo blame,

And toward honour quickned I his wit,
Whereas a daſtard els he mought have ſit.
He knowed how great Atride that made Troy freat,
And Hannibal to Rome ſo troubelous,
Whom Homer honoured Achilles that great,
And th' Affricane Scipion the famous,
And many other, by much honour glorious,
Whoſe fame and actes did lift them up above,
I did let fall in baſe diſhoneſt love.
And unto him, though he unworthy were,
I choſe the beſt of many a million,
That under ſunne yet never was her pere,
Of wiſdom womanhod, and of diſcrecion,
And of my grace I gave her ſuch a ſacion,
And eke ſuth way I taught her for to teache
That never baſe thought his hart ſo hie might reache.
Ever more thus to content his maiſtreſſe
That was his only frame of honeſtie,
I ſtirred him ſtill toward gentleneſſe,
And cauſed him to regard fidelitie;
Pacience I taught him in adverſitie,
Such vertues learned he in my great ſchoole,
Whereof repenteth now the ignorant foole.
Theſe were the ſame deceites, and bitter gall,
That I have uſed, the torment and the anger,
Sweter than ever did to other fall,
Of right good ſeed, ill fruite lo thus I gather,
And ſo ſhall he that the unkinde doth further;
A ſerpent nouriſh I under my wing,
And now of nature ginneth he to ſting.
And for to tell at laſt, my great ſervice,
From thouſandes diſhoneſties have I him drawen,
That, by my meanes, him in no manner wyſe,
Never vyle pleaſure once hath overthrowen,
Wherin his dede, ſhame hath him alwayes gnawen,
Doubting report that ſhould come to her eare,
Whom now he blames, her wonted he to feare;
What ever he hath of any honeſt cuſtome,
Of her, and me, that holds he every whit,
But lo, yet never was there neightly fantome,
So farre in errour, as he is from his wit,
To plain on us, he ſtriveth with the bit;
Which may rule him, and do him eaſe, and paine,
And in one hower, make all his griefe his gaine.
But one thing yet there is above all other,
I gave him winges, wherewith he might up flye,
To honour and fame, and if he woulde to hygher,
Then mortal things, above the ſtarry ſkye;
Conſidering the pleaſure, that an eye
Might geue in earth, by reaſon of the love,
What ſhould that be, that laſteth ſtill above?
And he the ſame himſelf hath ſaid ere this,
But now, forgotten is both that and I,
That gave him her, his only wealth and bliſſe,
And at this woord, with deadly ſhreke and crye:
Thou gave her once (quod I) but by and by
Thou took her ayen from me, that woworth the
Not I, but price, more worth than thou (quod he.)
At laſt, eche other for himſelf, concluded,
I trembling ſtill, but he, with ſmall reverence,
Lo, thus, as we eche other have accuſed,
Dere lady now we wayte thene only ſentence;
She ſmiling, at the whiſted audience,
I liketh me, quod ſhe, to have heard your quelige,
But longer time doth aſke a reſolution.

The lovers ſorrowfull ſtate maketh him write ſorrowfull ſonges, but ſouche, his love may change the ſame.

Marill no more altho,
The ſonges, I ſing do mone
For other life then woe,
I never proved none.
And in my heart alſo,
Is graven with letters deepe,
A thouſand ſighes and mo
A flod of teares to weepe.
How many a man in ſmart,
Find a matter to rejoyce!
How many a norſing hart,
Set forth a pleaſant voyce;
Play who ſo can that part,
Nedes muſt in me appere,
How fortune overthwart
Doth cauſe my morning chere.
Perdy there is no man
If he ſaw never ſight,
That perfitly tell can,
The nature of the light.
Alas, how ſhould I than,
That never taſt but ſowre,
But do as I began,
Continually to lowre.
But yet perchance ſome chance,
May chance to change my tune,
And when (ſouch) chance doth chance,
Then ſhall I thanke fortune.
And if I have (ſouch) chance,
Purchance or it be long,
For (ſouch) a pleaſant chance,
To ſing ſome pleaſant ſong.

The lover complaineth himſelf forſaken.

Where ſhall I have at mine own wil,
Teares to complaine, where ſhall I fet
Such ſighes, that I may ſigh my fill,
And then again my plaintes repete?
For though my plaint ſhall have none,
My tares cannot ſuffiſe my woe lend,
To mone harm, have I no friend,
For fortunes frend is miſhappes foe.
Comfort (God wot) els have I none,
But in the wind to waſt my woordes,
Nought moneth you my dedly mone,
But ſtill you turn it into boordes:
I ſpeak not now, to move your heart,
That you ſhould rue upon my pain,
The ſentence geven may not revert,
I know ſuch labour were but vain.
But ſens that I for you (my dere)
Have loſt that thing, that was my beſt,
A right ſmall loſs it muſt appere,
To leſe theſe woordes, and all the reſt.

But though they ſparkle in the wind,
Yet ſhall they ſhew your falſhed fayth,
Which is returned to his kind,
For lyke to lyke, the proverbe ſaith.
Fortune, and you did me avance,
Me thought I ſwam, and could not drowne,
Happieſt of al, but my miſchaunce
Did liſt me up to throw me downe.
And you with her, of cruelneſs,
Did ſet your foole upon my necke,
Me, and my welfare to oppreſs,
Without offence your heart to wreke.
Whare are your pleaſant woordes (alas)
Where is your faith, your ſtedfaſtneſs?
There is no more but all doth paſs,
And I am left all comfortleſs.
But ſins ſo much it doth you greve,
And alſo me my wretched lyfe,
Have here my trouth nought ſhall relieve,
But death alone, my wretched ſtriſe.
Therefore farewell, my lyfe, my death,
My gayne, my loſſe, my ſalve, my ſore,
Farewell alſo, with you my breath,
For I am gone for evermore.

Of his love that pricked her finger with a needle.

She ſate and ſowed that hath done me the wrong,
Whereof I plain, and have done many a day,
And, whilſt ſhe heard my plaint, in piteous ſong,
She wiſht my heart the ſampler, that it lay.
The blind maiſter, whome I have ſerved ſo long,
Grudging to heare, that he did heare her ſay,
Made her own weapon do her finger blede,
To feele, if pricking were ſo good indede.

Of the ſame.

What man hath hearde ſuch crueltie before,
That, when my plaint remembred her my wo,
That cauſed it, ſhe cruell more and more,
Wiſhed eche ſtich, as ſhe did ſit and ſow,
Had prickt my heart, for to encreaſe my ſore;
And as I thinke, ſhe thought that had been ſo,
For as ſhe thought this is heart in dede,
She prickt hard, and made herſelf to blede.

Requeſt to Cupide for revenge of his unkind love.

Behold love, thy power how ſhe deſpyſeth
My grievous payn, how little ſhe regardeth
The ſolemne othe whereof ſhe takes no cure,
Broken ſhe hath, and yet ſhe bydeth ſure.
Right at her eaſe, and little thee ſhe dredeth,
Weaponed thou art, and ſhe unarmed ſitteth;
To the diſdainefule, all her lyfe ſhe leadeth
To me ſpiteſule, without juſt cauſe or meaſure:
Behold Love, how proudly ſhe triumpeth,
I am in hold, but if thè pittie meveth,
Go, bend thy bow, that ſtony hartes breaketh,
And with ſome ſtroke, revenge the great diſpleaſure,
Of thee, and him that ſorow doth endure,
And as his lord the lowly her entreateth.

Complaint for true love unrequited.

What vaileth trouth, or by it to take pain,
To ſtrive by ſtedfaſtneſs, for to attain;
How to be juſt, and flee from doubleneſſe,
Since all alike, where ruleth craftineſſe.
Rewarded is both crafty, falſe, and plain?
Sooneſt he ſpedes, that moſt can lye and faine.
True meaning hart is had in hyghe diſdaine;
Againſt deceit and cloked doubleneſſe,
What vaileth trouth, or perfect ſtedfaſtneſſe.
Deceived is he, by falſe and craftie train,
That meanes no gile, and faithfull doth remaine.
Within the trap, without help or redreſſe,
But for to love, lo, ſuch a ſtern maiſtreſſe,
Where crueltie dwelles, alas it were in vain.

The lover that fled love, now folowes it with his barme.

Sometime I fled the fire, that one ſo brent,
By ſea, by land, by water, and by winde,
And now the coales I folow, that beguent,
From Dover to Cales, with willing minde.
Lo how deſire is both ſprong, and ſpent,
And he may ſee, that whilome was ſo blind,
And all this labour laughes he now to ſcorne,
Meaſhed in the briers, that erſt was onely torne.

The lover hopeth of better chaunce.

He is not dead, that ſometime had a fal,
The ſun returnes, your hed was under clowde,
And when fortune hath ſpit out all her gall,
I truſt, good luck to me ſhal be allowed.
For I have ſeen a ſhip in haven fal,
After that ſtorme hath broke bothe maſte and ſhroud,
The wellow eke, that ſtoupeth with the winde,
Doth riſe again, and greater wood doth binde.

The lover compareth his hart to the overcharged gonne.

The furious gonne, in his moſt ragyng yre,
When that the boule is rammed into fore,
And that the flame cannot part from the fier,
Crackes in ſunder, and in the ayer do rore
The ſhevered peces: ſo doth my deſire,
Whoſe flame encreaſeth aye from more to more,
Which to let out, I dare not loke, nor ſpeke,
So inwarde force my heart doth alto breake.

The lover ſuſpected of change, praieth that it be not beleved againſt him.

Accused though I be, without deſert,
Sith none can prove, believe it not for true;
For never yet, ſince that you had my hart,
Intended I to falſe, or be untrue.
Sooner I would of death ſuſtain the ſmart,
Than breake one worde of that I promiſed you,
Accept therefore my ſervice in good part,
None is alive, that can il tongue eſchew,
Hold them as falſe, and let not us depart,
Our friendſhip old, in hope of any new.
Put not thy truſt in ſuch as uſe to faine,
Except thou minde to put thy frend to pain.

The lover abuſed renounceth love.

My love to ſcorn, my ſervice to retain,
Therein me thought you uſed crueltie,
Since with good will I loſt my libertie,
Might never wo yet cauſe me to refraine.
But only this, which is extremitie,
To give me nought (alas) not to agree,
That as I was your man, I might remaine,
But ſince that thus ye liſt to order mee,
That would have been your ſervant true and faſt,
Diſpleaſe you not, my doting time is paſt;
And with my loſſe to leave I muſt agree,
For as there is a certaine time to rage,
So is there time ſuch madnes to aſſwage.

The lover profeſſeth himſelfe conſtant.

Within my breſt I never thought it gaine,
Of gentle mindes the fredome for to loſe,
Not in my hart ſank never ſuch diſdaine,
To be a forger, faultleſſe for to diſcloſe.
Nor can not I endure the truth to gloſe,
To ſet a gloſſe upon an earneſt paine,
Nor I am not in numbre one of thoſe,
That liſt to blow, retreate to every traine.

The lover ſendeth his complaintes and teares to ſue for grace.

Passe forth my wounted cryes,
Thoſe cruel eares to pearce,
Which in moſt hatefull wiſe,
Do ſtill my plaintes reverſe.
Doe you, my teares alſo,
So wot her barrein heart,
That pitie there may growe,
And crueltie depart.
For though hard rockes among
She ſemes to have been bred,
And of the tigre long
Bene nouriſhed and fed.
Yet ſhall not nature change,
If pitie once win place,
Whom as unknowne and ſtrange,
She now away doth chaſe.
And as the water ſoft,
Without forcing or ſtrength,
Where that it falleth oft,
Hard ſtones doth pierce at length.
So in her ſtony heart,
My plaintes at laſt ſhall grave,
And rigour ſet apart,
Winne graunt of that I crave.
Wherefore my playntes preſent
Stil ſo to her my ſuit,
As ye through her aſſent,
May bring to me ſome frute.
And as ſhe ſhall me prove,
So bid her me regarde,
And render love for love,
Which is a juſt reward.

The lovers caſe cannot be hidden, howsoever he diſſemble.

Your lokes ſo often caſt,
Your eyes ſo frendly rolde,
Your ſight fixed ſo faſt,
Alwaies one to beholde:
Though hide it faine ye woulde,
It plainly doth declare,
Who hath your hart in hold,
And where good will ye bare.
Faine would ye find a cloke,
Your brenning fire to hide,
Yet both the flame and ſmoke
Breakes out on every ſide.
Ye cannot love ſo guide,
That it no iſſue winne,
Abrode nedes muſt it glide,
That brennes ſo hotte within.
For cauſe your ſelf do wink,
Ye judge all other blinde,
And ſecret it you think,
Which every man dothe finde.
In waſt ſpend ye winde,
Your ſelf in love to quit,
For agues of that kinde,
Wyll ſhow, who hath the fit.
Your ſighs you ſet from farre,
And all to wry your wo,
Yet are ye ner the narre,
Men are not blinded ſo.
Depely oft ſwere ye no,
But all thoſe othes are vaine,
So well your eye doth ſhew,
Who putts your hart to paine.
Thinke not therefore to hide,
That ſtill it ſelf betraies,
Nor ſeke meanes to provide,
To dark the ſunny dayes.
Forget thoſe wonted wayes,
Leave of ſuch froowning chere,
There will be found no ſtaies,
To ſtop a thing ſo clere.

The lover praieth not to be disdained, nor refused, mistrusted, nor forsaken.

Disdaine me not without desert,
Nor leave me not so sodeynly,
Since well ye wot, that in my hert,
I meane ye not but honestly.
Refuse me not without cause why,
Nor think me not to be unjust,
Since that by lott of fantasie,
This careful knot nedes knit I must.
Mistrust me not, though some there be,
That fain would spot my stedfastnesse;
Beleve them not, sins that ye se,
The prose is not, as they expresse.
Forsake me not, till I deserve,
Nor hate me not, till I offende,
Destroy me not, till that I swerve,
But sins ye know what I entende.
Disdaine me not, that am your owne,
Refuse me not, that am so true,
Mistrust me not till all be knowen,
Forsake me not, now for no new.

The lover lamenteth his estate, with sute for grace.

For want of will in wo I plaine,
Under colour of soberness,
Renewing with my sute my paine,
My wan hope with your stedfastnesse.
Awake therefore of gentlenesse,
Regard at length, I you require,
My swelting paines of my desire.
Betimes who geveth willingly,
Redoubled thankes aye doth deserve,
And I that sue unfainedly,
In fruitlesse hope alas do sterve.
How great my cause is for to swerve,
And yet how stedfast is my sute,
Lo! here ye see, where is the frute.
As hounde that hath his keper lost,
Seke I your presence to obtaine,
In which my hart deliteth most,
And shall delight though I be slain.
You may release my hand of paine,
Lose then the care that makes me crie,
For want of help or els I dye.
I dye though not incontinent.
By processe yet consumingly,
Is wast of fire which doth relent
If you as wilfull will deny.
Wherefore cease of such cruelty,
And take me wholy in your grace,
Which lacketh will to change his place.

The lover waileth his changed joyes.

If every man might him avaunt,
Of fortunes friendly chere,
It was my self I must it graunt,
For I have bought it dere,
And derely have I held also
The glory of her name,
In yielding her such tribute so,
As did set forth her fame.
Sometime I stood so in her grace,
That as I would require,
Ech joy I thought did me embrace
That furdered my desire,
And all these pleasures lo! had I,
That fancy might support,
And nothing she did me deny,
That was unto my comfort.
I had (what would you more perdie)
Ech grace that I did crave,
Thus fortunes will was unto me,
All thing that I would have,
But all to rathe, alas! the while,
She built on such a ground,
In little space, to greate a guile,
In her now have I found.
For she hath turned so her whele,
That I, unhappy man,
May waile the time that I did sele,
Wherewith she fed me then,
For broken now are her behestes,
And pleasant lookes she gave,
And therefore now all my requestes,
From perill cannot save.
Yet would I well it might appere
To her my cheise regard,
Though my desertes have been to dere
To merit such reward.
Sins fortunes will is now so bent,
To plague me thus pore man,
I must my self therewith content,
And bear it as I can.

To his love that has given answere of refusall.

The aunswere that ye made to me my deare,
When I did sue for my pore hartes redresse,
Hath so appalde my countenance, and my chere,
That in this case, I am all comfortlesse,
Sins I of blame no cause can well express.
I have no wrong, where I can claim no right
Nought tane me fro, where I have nothing had,
Yet of my wo, I cannot so be quite,
Namely sins that another may be glad
With that, that thus in sorrow makes me sad.
Yet none can claime (I say) by former graunt
That knoweth not of any graunt at all.
And by desert, I dare well make a vaunt,
Of faithfull will, there is no where that shall,
Beare you more trueth, more ready at your call.
Now good then, call againe that bitter word,
That toucht your frend so nere with plagues of paine,
And say my dere that it was said in bord.
Late or to sone, let it not rule the gaine,
Wherewith free will doth true desert retayne.

To his ladie, cruel over her yelden lover.

Such is the courſe that natures kind hath wrought,
That ſnakes have time to caſt away their ſtings,
Againſt chain'd priſoners what nede defence be ſought,
The fierce lyon will hurt no yielding things;
Why ſhould ſuch ſpight be nurſed then by thoughts,
Sith all theſe powers are preſt under thy wings,
And eke thou ſeeſt, and reaſon thee hath taught,
What miſchiefe malice many wayes it brings,
Conſider eke, that ſpite avayleth nought,
Therefore this ſong thy fault to thee it ſings:
Diſpleaſe thee not, for ſaying thus (me thought)
Nor hate thou him from whom no hate forth ſprings,
For furies that in hell be execrable,
For that they hate, are made moſt miſerable.

The lover complaineth that deadly ſickneſs cannot help his affection.

The enemy of lyfe, decayer of all kinde,
That with his cold withers away the grene
This other night me in my bed did fynde,
And offer'd me to ryde me fever clene,
And I did graunt ſo did diſpair me blinde,
He drew his bowe with arrowes ſharp and kene,
And ſtroke the place where love had hyt before,
And drave the fyrſt dart deper more and more.

The lover rejoyceth the enjoying of his love.

Once as methought fortune me kiſt,
And bade me aſk what I thought beſt,
And I ſhould have it as me lyſt,
Therewith to ſet my hart at reſt.
I aſked but my ladyes hart,
To have forevermore myne owne,
Then at an end were all my ſmart,
Then ſhould I nede no more to mone.
Yet for all that a ſtormy blaſt,
Had overturn'd this goodly nay:
And fortune ſemed at the laſt,
That to her promiſe ſhe ſaid nay.
But like as one out of diſpaire,
To ſodeyne hoape revived I;
Now fortune ſheweth her ſelfe ſo fayre,
That I content me wonderfly.
My moſt deſyre my hand my reach,
My will is alway at my hande,
Me nede not long for to beſech,
Her that hath power me to comande.
What earthly thing more can I crave,
What would I wiſh more at my will;
Nothing on earth more would I have,
Save that I have, to have it ſtill.
For fortune now hath kept her promeſſe,
In graunting me my moſt deſyre,
Of my ſoveraigne I have redreſs,
And I contente me with my hyre.

The lover complaineth the unkindeneſs of his love.

My lute awake perform the laſt
Labour that thou and I ſhall waſt:
And ende that I have now begunne,
And when this ſong is ſong and paſt,
My lute be ſtyll for I have done.
As to be heard where eare is none,
As leade to grave in marble ſtone,
My ſong may pearce her hart as ſoon,
Should we then ſigh, or ſing, or mone,
No, no, my lute, for I have done.
The rocks do not ſo cruelly,
Repulſe the waves continually,
As ſhe my ſuite and affection:
So that I am paſt remedy,
Whereby my lute and I have done.
Proude of the ſpoyle that thou haſt gotte,
Of ſimple hearts through loves ſhot,
By whome unkind thou haſt them wonne,
Think not he hath his bow forgott,
Although my lute and I have done.
Vengeance ſhall fall on thy diſdaine
That makeſt but game on earneſt payne,
Think not alone under the ſunn,
Unquit to cauſe thy lovers playne,
Although my lute and I have done.
May chanced thee lye withred and old,
In winter nights that are ſo cold,
Playing in vaine unto the moon,
Thy wiſhes then dare not be told,
Care then who lift for I have done.
And then may chaunce thee to repent,
The time that thou haſt loſt and ſpent,
To cauſe thy lovers ſighe and ſwone,
Then ſhalt thou know beauty but lent,
And wiſh and wod want as I have done.
Now ceaſe my lute this is the laſt,
Labour that thou and I ſhall waſt,
And ended is that we begonne,
Now is this ſong both ſong and paſt.
My lute be ſtill for I have done.

How by a kiſs, he found both his life and death.

Nature that gave the bee ſo feate a grace,
To finde honey of ſo wondrous faſhion,
Hath taught the ſpyder out of the ſame place,
To fetch poyſon by ſtraunge alteration.
Though this be ſtrange, it is a ſtranger caſe,
With one kiſs by ſecret operation;
Both theſe at once in theſe your lips to finde,
In change whereof, I leave my hart behinde.

The lover deſcribeth his being taken with ſight of his love.

Unwarely ſo was never no man taught,
With ſtedfaſt looke upon a goodly face,
As I of late, for ſodaynly me thought,
My hart was torne out of his place.

Thorow mine eye the ſtroke from hers dyd ſlide,
And down directly to my heart it ranne,
In help whereof the blood thereto did glide,
And left my face both pale and wanne.
Then was I like a man for wo amazed,
Or like the fowle that flyeth into the fyre,
For while that I upon her beauty gaſed,
The more I burned in my deſire.
Anon the blood ſtart in my face agayne,
Inflam'd with heat, that it had at my hart,
And brought therewith throughout in every veine,
A quakeing heat with pleaſant ſmart.
Then was I like the ſtraw, when that the flame
Is driven therein, by force and rage of wynde.
I can not tell, alaſs! what ſhall I blame,
Nor what to ſeke, nor what to finde.
But well I wot the grief doth hold me ſore,
In heat and cold, betwixt both hope and dreade,
That, but her help to health doe me reſtore,
This reſtleſſe lyfe I may not leade.

To his lover to looke upon him.

ALL in thy looke my life doth whole depend,
Thou hydeſt thy ſelf, and I muſt dye therefore,
But ſince thou may'ſt ſo eaſely help thy frende,
Why doeſt thou ſtick to ſalve that thou madeſt ſore:
Why do I dye, ſince thou mayſt me defend,
And if I dye thy life may laſt noe more,
For each by other doth live and have reliefe,
I in thy look, and thou moſt in my griefe.

The lover excuſeth him of woordes, wherewith he was unjuſtly charged.

PERDY I ſayde it not,
Nor never thought to doe,
As well as I ye wot,
I have no power thereto.
And if I dyd, the lot
That firſt dyd me exchange,
May never ſlake the knot,
But ſtrayt it to my payne.
And if I did eche thing,
That may do harme or wo,
Continually may wring,
My heart where ſo I goe.
Report may always ring
Of ſhame on me for aye,
If in my heart did ſpryng,
The words that you doe ſay.
And if I did, each ſtarr,
That is in heaven above,
May frame on me to marre,
The hope I have in love.
And if I did ſuch warr
As they brought unto Troy,
Bring all my life as farre
From all his luſt and joye.
And if I did ſo ſaye,
The beauty that me bounde,
Encreaſe from day to day,
More cruel to my wounde.
With all the mone that may,
To plaint my turne my ſong,
My lyfe may ſoon decaye,
Without redreſſe by wrong.
If I be cleare from thought,
Why do you then complayne,
Then is this thing but ſought,
To turne my hart to payne.
Then this that you have wrought,
You muſt it now redreſſe,
Of right therefore you ought,
Such rigour to repreſſe.
And as I have deſerved,
So grant me now my hyre.
You know I never ſwerved,
You never found me lyer.
For Rachel have I ſerved,
For Lea carde I never,
And her I have reſerved
Within my hart for ever.

Of ſuch as had forſaken him.

LURE my fair faulcon, and thy fellowes all,
How well pleaſant it were your libertie,
Ye not forſake me, that fayre mought you fall,
But they that ſometime liked my company.
Like lyce away from dead bodyes they crall,
Lo whan a proof in light adverſitie,
But ye my byrds I ſwear by all your belles,
Ye be my friends and very fewe elles.

A deſcription of ſuch a one as he would love.

A FACE that ſhould content me wonderous well,
Should not be fatt, but lovely to behold,
Of lively look all griefe for to repell
With right good grace ſo would I that it ſhould.
Speak without word, ſuch words as none can tell,
Her treſs alſo ſhould be of criſped gold,
With wit and theſe, perchaunce I might be tryde
And knit againe with knot that ſhould not ſlide.

How impoſſible it is to fynde quietneſſe in love.

EVER my hap is ſlack and ſlow in comeing
Deſire encreaſing aye my hope uncertayne,
With doubtful love that but encreaſeth paine,
For tigre like ſo ſwift it is in parting.
Alas! the ſnow black, ſhall it bee and ſcalding,
The ſea waterles, and fiſh upon the mountaine,
The Temmes ſhall backe returne in her fountaine,
And where he roſe, the ſunn ſhall take her lodging.

Ere I in this finde peace or quietneſs,
Or that love, or my lady right wiſly,
Leave to conſpire againſt me wrongfully,
And if I have after ſuch bitterneſs,
One drop of ſwete, my mouth is out of taſte,
That all my truſt and travell is but waſte.

Of love, fortune, and the lovers minde.

Love, fortune, and my minde which doe remember
Eke that is now, and that once hath bene,
Torment my hart ſo ſore that very often
I hate and envy them beyond all meaſure.
Love fleeth my hart, while fortune is depriver,
Of all my comfort, the fooliſh minde than,
Burneth and plaineth, as one that very ſeldome,
Liveth in reſt ſo ſtill in diſpleaſure;
My pleaſant dayes they flete and paſſe.
And dayly doth myne yll change to the worſe,
When more than halfe is runne now of my courſe.
Alas! not of ſtele, but of brittle glaſs,
I ſee that from my hand falleth my truſt,
And all my thoughts are daſhed into duſt.

The lover praiſeth his offred hart to be received.

How oft have I, my dere and cruel foe,
With my great paine to get ſome peace or truce,
Given you my hart but you do not uſe,
In ſoe high things, to caſt your mind ſo low.
If any other looke for it as you trow,
Their vaine, weake hope doth greatly them abuſe,
And that thus I diſdaine, that you refuſe,
It was once mine, it can no more be ſo.
If you it chaſe that it in you can find
In this exile no manner of conſort,
Nor live alone nor where he is cald reſort,
He may wander from his natural kinde.
So ſhall it be great hurt unto us twaine,
And yours the loſs, and mine the deadly paine.

The lovers life compared to the Alpes.

Like unto theſe unmeaſurable mountaines,
So in my painfull life the burden of yre,
For hie be they, and hie is my deſire,
And I of teares, and they be full of fountaines.
Under craggy rocks they have barren plaines,
Hard thoughts in me my woſull minde doth tire,
Small fruite and many leaves theire tops do attire,
With ſmall effect great truſt in me remaines.
The boiſterous winds oft theire high bowes do blaſt,
Hott ſighes in me continually be ſhed,
Wilde beaſts in them, firce love in me is fed,
Unmoveable am I, and they ſtedfaſt.
Of ſinging-birds, they have the tune and note,
And I alwayes plaintes paſſing through my throte.

Charging of his love as unpiteous and loving other.

If amorous faith, or if an hart unfeined,
I ſwete langeur, a great lovely deſire,
If honeſt will kindled in gentle fire,
If long errour in a blind maſe chained.
If in my viſage eche thought diſtained,
Or my ſparkling voice, lower or hier,
Which feare and ſhame ſo wofully doth tire,
If pale colour which love alas hath ſtained.
If to have another, then my ſelf more dere,
If waleing or ſighing continually,
With ſorrowful anger feding buſily
If burned farr of and if friſing nere.
Are cauſe that I by love my ſelf deſtroye,
Yours is the fault, and mine the great annoy.

A renouncing of love.

Farewell love, and all thy lawes for ever,
Thy bated hookes ſhall tangle me no more,
Seneca, and Plato call me from thy lore,
To parfit welth my witt for to endever.
In blind error when I did perſever.
Thy ſharp repulſe, that pricketh aye ſo ſore
Taught me in trifles that I ſet noe ſtore,
But ſcape forth thence ſince libertie is lieffer.
Therefore farewell go trouble younger harts,
And in time claime noe more auctoritie,
With idle youth goe uſe thy propertie,
And thereon ſpend thy many brittle dartes.
For hitherto though I have loſt my time,
Me liſt no longer rotten bowes to clime.

The lover forſaketh his unkind love.

My hart I gave thee not to doe it paine,
But to preſerve lo it to thee was taken,
I ſerved thee, thee not that I ſhould be forſaken,
But that I ſhould receive reward againe.
I was content, thy ſervant to remaine,
And not to be repayed on this faſhion,
Now ſince in thee there is no other reaſon,
Diſpleaſe thee not if that I do refraine.
Unſatiat of my wo and thy deſire,
Aſſured by craft for to excuſe thy fault,
But ſince it pleaſeth thee to fain default,
Farewell I ſay, departing from the fire.
For he that doth believe bearing in hand,
Ploweth in the water and ſoweth in the ſand.

The lover deſcribeth his reſtleſſe ſtate.

The flameing ſighes that boyle within my breaſt,
Sometime break forth and they can well declare,
The hartes unreſt, and how that he doth fear,
The paine thereof, the griefe, and all the reſt.

The ſhattered eyen from whence the teares do fall,
Do feel ſome force or elſe they would be dry,
The waſted fleſh of colour ded can try,
And ſometime tell what ſweetneſs in the gall.
And he that luſt to ſee, and to diſcearne,
How care can force within a wearied mind,
Come he to me I am that place aſinde,
But for all this noe force, it doth noe harme,
The wounde alas hap in ſome other place,
From whence noe toole away the ſcar can race.
But you which of ſuch like have had your part,
Can beſt be judge wherefore my friend ſo dere,
I thought it good my ſtate ſhould now appere,
To you, and that there is no great deſart.
And whereas you in weighty matters great,
Of fortune ſaw the ſhaddow that you know
For trifling things I now am ſtricken ſoe.
That though I feel my hart doth wound and beat,
I ſit alone ſave on the ſecond day,
My fever comes with whome I ſpend my time,
In burning heat while that ſhe liſt aſſigne,
And who hath helth and liberty alway,
Let him thank God, and let him not provoke,
To have the like of this my painfull ſtroke.

The lover laments the death of his love.

The piller periſht is whereto I lent,
The ſtrongeſt ſtay of mine unquiet minde;
The like of it no man agayn can fynde,
From eaſt to weſt ſtill ſeeking though he went,
To mynd unhappe forhappe away hath rent,
Of all my joy the very bark and rinde,
And I (alas!) by chaunce am thus aſſinde,
Dayly to mourn, till death do it relent.
But ſince that thus it is by deſtiny,
What can I more but have a wofull hart,
My penne in plaint my voice in carefull crye,
My mynde in woe my body full of ſmart,
And I my ſelf, my ſelf alwayes to hate,
Tyll dreadfull death doe eaſe my dolefull ſtate.

The lover ſendeth ſighes to move his ſuite.

Goe burning ſighes unto the frozen hart,
Goe break the yce which pities painfull dart,
Might never pierce, and if that mortall prayer,
In heaven be heard at leaſt yet I deſyre,
That death, or mercy, end my wofull ſmart.
Take with thee paine whereof I have my part,
And eke the flame from which I cannot ſtart.
And leave me then in reſt I you require,
Goe burning ſighs fulfill that I deſire.
I muſt goe worke, and ſee my craft and arte,
For truth and faith in her is laid apart,
Alas I cannot therefore now aſſayle her,
With pitifull complaint and ſcalding fire,
That from my breſt deceivebly doth ſtart.

Complaint of the abſence of his love.

Soe feeble is the thred that doth the burden ſtay,
Of my poor life in heavy plight that falleth in decay,
That but it have elſewhere ſome ayde or ſome ſuccours,
The running ſpindle of my fate anon ſhall end his courſe.
For ſince the unhappy houre that dyd me to depart,
From my ſweet weale one only hoape hath ſtayed my life apart,
Which doth perſwade ſuch words unto my ſored mynde,
Maintaine thy ſelfe, O wofull wight, ſome better luck to find.
For though thou be deprived from thy deſired ſight,
Who can thee tell, if thy returne before thy more delight:
Or who can tell thy loſs if thou mayſt once recover,
Some pleaſant houres thy wo may wrap, and thee defend and cover.
Thus in this truſt, as yet it hath my life ſuſtained,
But now (alas) I ſee it faint, and I by truſt am trayned.
The tyme doth flete, and I ſee how the hours do bende,
So faſt that I have ſcant the ſpace to marke my comeing end.
Weſtward the ſunn from out the eaſt ſcant his lite, ſhewd
When in the weſt he hies him ſtraite within the dark of night
And comes as faſt, where he began his path awry,
From eaſt to weſt, from weſt to eaſt, ſo doth his journey lye.
Thy lyfe ſo ſhort ſo frayle, that mortall men lyve here,
Soe great a weight, ſo heavy charge the bodyes that we here.
That when I think upon the diſtance and the ſpace,
That doth ſo farre divide me from thy dere deſired face.
I know not how t' attaine the winges that I require,
To lyft me up that I might fly to follow my deſyre.
Thus of that hope that doth my lyfe ſomethyng ſuſtyne,
Alas I fear, and partly feel full little doth remaine.
Eche place doth bring me grieſe where I doe not behold,
Thoſe lively eyes which of my thoughts, were wont the keys to hold.
Thoſe thoughts were pleaſant ſweet whilſt I enjoy'd that grace,
My pleaſure paſt, my preſent pain, when I might well embrace.
And for becauſe my want ſhould more my woe increaſe,
In watch and ſleep both day and night my will doth never ceaſe.
That thing to wiſhe whereof ſynce I did loſe the ſight,
Was never thing that mought in ought my wofull hart delight.
Th' uneaſy life I lead doth teach me for to mete,
The floods, the ſeas, the land, the hills, that doth them intermete.

Twene me and thoſe ſhene lights that wonted for to clere,
My darked pangs of cloudy thoughts as bright as Phebus ſphere;
It teacheth me alſo, what was my pleaſant ſtate,
The more to feele by ſuch record how that my welth doth bate.
If ſuch record (alas) provoke the inflamed mynde,
Which ſprung that day that I dyd leave the beſt of me behynde.
If love forgeat himſelfe by length of abſence let,
Who doth me guid (O wofull wretch) unto this baited net: [for me,
Where doth encreaſe my care, much better were
As dumm as ſtone all things forgott, ſtill abſent for to be.
Alas the clear chriſtall, the bright tranſplendant glaſſe, [it haſe.
Doth not bewray the colours hid which underneath
As doth the accumbred ſprite the thoughtfull throwes diſcover, [we cover.
Of teares delyte of fervent love that in our hartes
Out by theſe eyes, it ſheweth that evermore delight;
In plaint and teares to ſeek redreſs, and eke both day and night.
Thoſe kindes of pleaſures moſt wherein men ſoe rejoice, [voice.
To me they do redouble ſtill of ſtormy ſighes the
For, I am one of them, whom plaint doth well content, [lament.
It fits me well my abſent wealth me ſemes for to
And with my teares t' aſſy to charge myne eyes twayne,
Like as my hart above the brink is fraughted full of payne.
And for becauſe thereto, that theſe fair eyes do treate, [repeate.
Do me provoke, I will returne, my plaint thus to
For there is nothing els, ſo toucheth me within,
Where they rule all, and I alone, nought but the caſe or ſkin.
Wherefore I ſhall returne to them as weſt or ſpring,
From whom deſcends my mortall wo, above all other thing.
So ſhall myne eyes in paine accompany my hart,
That were the guides, that did it lead of love to feel the ſmart. [pride,
The criſped gold that doth ſurmount Appolloes
The lively ſtreames of pleaſant ſtarrs that under it doth glyde.
Wherein the beames of love doe ſtill increaſe theire heate, [me ſweat,
Which yet ſo far touch me to near in cold to make
The wiſe and pleaſant take, ſee rare or elſe alone,
That gave to me the curties gyft, that earſt had never none.
Be far from me alas, and every other thing,
I might forbear with better will, then this that did me bring.
With pleaſand woord and cheer, redreſs of lingred payne, [trayne.
And wonted oft in kindled will, to vertue me to
Thus am I forc'd to hear and hearken after news,
My comfort ſcant, my large deſire in doubtful truſt renews.
And yet with more delight to move my wofull caſe:
I muſt complaine theſe hands, thoſe armes, that firmly do embrace.
Me from my ſelf, and rule the ſterne of my poor lyfe,
The ſweet diſdaynes, the pleaſant wrathes, and eke the holy ſtrife.
That wonted well to tune in temper juſt and mete,
The rage, that oft did make me err by farour undiſcrete. [hills,
All this is hid from me with ſharp and ragged
At others will my long abode, my depe dyſpayr fulfills.
And of my hope ſometime ryſe up by ſoune redreſſe,
It ſtumbleth ſtraite for feable faint my fear hath ſuch exceſſe.
Such is the ſort of hoape, the leſs for more deſyre,
And yet I truſt e're that I dye, to ſee that I require.
The reſting place of love, where virtue dwells and and growes, [repoſe,
There I deſire my weary life ſometime may take
My ſong thou ſhalt attaine, to find the pleaſant place,
Where ſhe doth live by whom I live, may chance to have this grace.
When ſhe hath read and ſeen, the griefe wherein I ſerve,
Between her breſts ſhe ſhall the put, there ſhall ſhe thee reſerve.
Then tell her, that I come, ſhe ſhall me ſhortly ſee,
And if for waight the body fayl, the ſoul ſhall to her flee.

The lover blameth his love for renting of the letter he ſent her.

Suffised not (madame) that you did teare,
My wofull hart, but this alſo to rent,
The weeping paper that to you I ſent,
Whereof ech letter was written with a tear.
Could not my preſent paynes (alas) ſuffiſe,
Your greedy heart, and that my heart doth feel,
Torments that prick more ſharper than the ſteel,
But new and new muſt to my lott aryſe,
Uſe then my death, ſoe ſhall your crueltye,
Spite of your ſpyte, rid me from all my ſmart,
And I no more ſuch torments of the hart,
Feel as I doe this ſhall you gayne thereby.

The lover curſeth the tyme when fyrſt he fell in love.

When fyrſt myne eyes did view and mark,
Thy fayr beauty to behold,
And when my ears lyſned to hark,
The pleaſant woords that thou me tolde.
I would as then I had been free,
From ears to hear, and eyes to ſee.
And when my lipps gan fyrſt to mone,
Whereby my hart to thee was knowne,
And when my tongue dyd talke of love,
To thee that haſt true love downe throwne.

I would my lipps and tongue alſoe,
Had then been damme, no deal to goe.
And when my hands have handled ought,
That thee hath kept in memory,
And when my feet have gone and ſought,
To find and get the company.
I would each hand a foot had beene,
And I each foot a hand had ſeen.
And when in mind I dyd conſent,
To follow this my fancies will,
And when my hart did firſt relent,
To taſt ſuch bait my life to ſpill.
I would my hart had been as thine,
Or els thy hart had been as myne.

The lover determineth to ſerve faithfully.

SINCE love will needs, that I ſhall love,
Of very force I muſt agree,
And ſince no chaunce may it remove,
In wealth and in adverſitie.
I ſhall alway my ſelfe apply,
To ſerve and ſuffer patiently.
Though for good will I finde but hate,
And cruelly my life to waſt,
And though that ſtill a wretched ſtate,
Should pyne my days unto the laſt:
Yet I profeſs it willingly,
To ſerve and ſuffer patiently.
For ſince my hart is bound to ſerve,
And I not ruler of myne owne,
What foe befall, tyll that I ſterve,
By proofe full well it ſhall be knowne.
That I ſhall ſtill my ſelf apply,
To ſerve and ſuffer patiently.
Yet though my griefe finde noe redreſs,
But ſtill encreaſe before myne eyes,
Though my reward be cruelneſſe,
With all the harme, happs can devyſe,
Yet I profeſs it willingly,
To ſerve and ſuffer patiently.
Yea though fortune her pleaſant face,
Should ſhew, to ſet me up aloft,
And ſtraight my wealth for to deface,
Should wrythe away, as ſhe doth oft.
Yet would I ſtill my ſelf applye,
To ſerve and ſuffer patiently.
There is no griefe, no ſmert, no wo,
That yet I feel, or after ſhall,
That from this minde may make me goe,
And whatſoever me befall,
I do profeſs it willingly,
To ſerve and ſuffer patiently.

The lover ſuſpected, blameth ill tongues.

MISTRUSTFULL minds be moved,
To have me in ſuſpect,
The truth it ſhall be proved,
Which time ſhall once detect.
Though falſhed goe about,
Of crime to me accuſe,
At length I do not doubt,
But truth ſhall me excuſe.
Such ſauce, as they have ſerved,
To me without deſert,
Even as they have deſerved,
Thereof God ſend them part,

The lover complaineth, and his ladie comforteth.

Lover. IT burneth yet, alas, my heartes deſire,
Lady. What is the thing, that hath inflam'd thy heart?
Lo. A certaine point as fervent as the fyre.
La. The heat ſhall ceaſe if that thou wilt convert,
Lo. I cannot ſtop the fervent rageing yre,
La. What may I do, if thy ſelf cauſe thy ſmart?
Lo. Heare my requeſt, and rew my weeping chere
La. With right good will ſay on, lo, I thee here.
Lo. That thing would I, that maketh two content,
La. Thou ſeekeſt, perchaunce of me, that I may not.
Lo. Would God, thou wouldeſt, as thou mayſt, well aſſent.
La. That I may not the griefe is myne, God wot,
Lo. But if I feele, whatſo thy woordes have ment.
La. Suſpect me not, my woordes be not forgett.
Lo. Then ſay, alas! ſhall I have help or no.
La. I ſee no time to anſwer, yea, but no.
Lo. Say yea, dere hart, and ſtand no more in doubt.
La. I may not grant a thing that is ſo dere.
Lo. Lo with delayes, thou dryves me ſtill aboot.
La. Thou wouldeſt my death, it plainly doth appeare. [out.
Lo. Firſt may my heart his blood, and life blede
La. Then for my ſake, alas! thy will forbeare.
Lo. From day to day, thus waſtes my lyfe away.
La. Yet for the beſt, ſuffre ſome ſmale delay.
Lo. Now good, ſay yea, do once ſo good a dede,
La. If I ſayd yea, what ſhould thereof enſue?
Lo. An heart in payne of ſuccour ſo ſhould ſpede,
Twixt yea, and nay, my dout ſhall ſtill renew,
My ſwete, ſay yea, and do away this drede.
La. Thou wilt nedes ſo, be it ſo, but then be trew.
Lo. Nought would I elſe, nor other treaſure neme,
Thus hearts be wonne by love, requeſt, and mone.

Why love is blinde.

OF purpoſe, love choſe firſt for to be blinde,
For he with ſight of that, that I beholde,
Vanquiſh't had been, againſt all godly kynde,
His bow your hand, and truſſe ſhould have unfold.
And he with me to ſerve had been affinde,
But, for he blind, and reckleſs would him hold
And ſtill, by chance, his dredly ſtrokes beſtow
With ſuch, as ſee, I ſerve, and ſuffer wo.

To his unkinde love

WHAT rage is this, what furor of what kynde,
What power, what plage, doth wery thus myne minde?
Within my bones to rankle is aſſynde,
What poiſon pleaſant ſwete.
Lo ſee myne eyes flow with continual teares,
The body ſtill away ſleepleſſe it weares,
My foode nothing my fainting ſtrength repayres
Nor doth my lim mee ſuſtayne.
In depe wyde wound, the deadly ſtroke doth turne,
To cureleſſe ſkarre that never ſhall returne,
Go to, triumph, rejoyce thy goodly turne,
Thy frend thou doeſt oppreſſe.
Oppreſſe thou doeſt, and haſt of him no cure,
Nor yet my plaint no pitie can procure,
Fierce tygre, fell, hard rocke without recure
Cruell rebell to love.
Once may thou love, never be loved again,
So love thou ſtill, and not thy love obtayne,
So wrathfull love with ſpites of juſt diſdaine,
May thret thy cruell hart.

The lover blameth his inſtant deſyre.

DESYRE, (alas!) my maiſter, and my foe,
So ſore altered thy ſelfe, how maiſt thou ſee,
Some time thou ſeekeſt, and dryves me to and fro,
Some time thou leadeſt, that leadeth thee and me,
What reaſon is to rule thy ſubjects ſo,
By forced law and mutabilitie?
For where by thee I doubted to have blame,
Even now by hate agayne I doubt the ſame.

The lover complaineth his eſtate.

I SEE that chance hath choſen me,
Thus ſecretly to live in payne,
And to another geven the free,
Of all my loſſe to have the gayne,
By chance aſſinde thus do I ſerve,
And other have that I deſerve.
Unto my ſelf ſome time alone,
I do lament my wofull caſe,
But what availeth me to mone,
Since truth and pitie hath no place,
In them, to whom I ſue and ſerve,
And other have that I deſerve.
To ſeke by meane to change this mind,
Alas, I prove it will not be,
For in my heart I cannot finde,
Once to refrayne, but ſtill agree
As bound by force alway to ſerve,
And other have that I deſerve.
Such is the fortune that I have,
To love them moſt, that love me leſt,
And to my payne to ſeek and crave
The thing, that other have poſſeſt,
So thus in vaine alway I ſerve,
And other have that I deſerve,
And till I may appeaſe the heate,
If that my happe will happe ſo well
To wayle my wo my heart ſhall freate
Whoſe penſif payne my tong can tell,
Yet thus unhappy muſt I ſerve,
And other have that I deſerve.

Of his love called Anna.

WHAT woord is that, that changeth not,
Though it be turnde and made in twayne,
It is mynne, Anna, God it wote
The only cauſer of my payne,
My love that medeth with diſdaine,
Yet is it loved, what will you more,
It is my ſalve, and eke my ſore.

That pleaſure is mixed with every paine.

VENEMOUS thornes that are ſo ſharpe and keene,
Beare flowers we ſee, full freſh and fayre of hue,
Poyſon is alſo put in medicine,
And unto man his health doth oft renue,
The fyre that all things eke conſumeth clene,
May hurt and heale: then if that this be true,
I truſt ſome time my harm may be my health,
Sins every woe is joyned with ſome wealth.

A riddle of a gyft geven by a ladie.

A LADY gave me a gift ſhe had not,
And I received her gift which I took not,
She gave it me willingly, and yet ſhe would not,
And I received it albeit I could not.
If ſhe give it me I force not,
And if ſhe take it again ſhe cares not,
Conſter what this is and tell not,
For I am faſt ſworne, I may not.

That ſpeaking or profering bringes alway ſpeding.

SPEAKE thou and ſpede, where will or power ought helpeth,
Where power doth want, will muſt be wonne by welth:
For nede will ſpede, where will workes not his fynd.
And gayne, thy foes thy frendes ſhall cauſe thee kynde,
For ſute and golde, what do not they obtayne,
Of good and bad the tryers are theſe twayne.

He ruleth not, though he reigne over realmes, that is ſubject to his owne luſtes.

IF thou wilt mighty be, flee from the rage,
Of cruell will, and ſee thou kepe the free,

From the foul yoke of ſenſual bondage,
For though thine empire ſtretchte to Indian ſee,
And for thy fear trembleth the fardeth Thules,
If thy deſyre have over thee the power,
Subject then art thou, and no governour.
If to be noble and high thy mind be moved,
Conſider well thy grounde and thy beginning,
For he that hath eche ſtarre in heaven fixed,
And gives the moone her hornes and her eclipſing.
A lyke hath made the noble in his working,
So that wretched no way may thou be,
Except foule luſt and vyce doe conquer thee,
All wer that ſo thou had a flood of golde,
Unto thy thirſt yet ſhould it not ſuffice.
And though with Indian ſtones a thouſand folde,
More precious then can thy ſelf deviſe.
Ycharged were thy backe, thy covetiſe,
And buſy byting yet ſhould never let,
Thy wretched lyfe, nede do thy death profet.

Whether libertie by loſſe of life, or life in priſon and thraldome, be to be preferred.

Lyke as the byrde within the cage incloſed,
The dore unſparred, her foe the hawke without
Twixt death and priſon pitiouſly oppreſſed,
Whether for to chooſe ſtandeth in dout.
Lo ſo do I, which ſeke to bring about,
Which ſhould be beſt by determination
By loſſe of life, libertie, or lyfe by priſon.
O miſchief by miſchief to be redreſſed,
Where payne is beſt there lyeth but little pleaſure,
By ſhort death better to be delivered,
Then byde in painfull lyfe, thraldome and dolour.
Small is the pleaſure where much payne we ſuffer,
Rather therefore to chuſe me thinketh wiſdome,
By loſs of lyfe libertie, then lyfe by priſon.
And yett me thinkes although I live and ſuffer,
I do but wayte a time and fortunes chance,
Oft many thinges do happen in one hower,
That which oppreſt me now may me advance,
In time is truſt which by deathes grevaunce
Is wholy loſt. Then were it not reaſon
By death to chuſe libertie, and not life by priſon,
But death wer deliverance where lif lengthens paine,
Of theſe two illes let ſee now chuſe the beſt,
This birde to deliver that here doth plaine;
What ſay ye lovers, which ſhal be the beſt?
In cage thraldome, or by the hawke oppreſt;
And which to chuſe, make plain concluſion
By loſs of lyfe libertie, or lyfe by priſon,

Againſt bourders of money.

For ſhamefaſt harme of great and hatefull nede,
In depe diſpayre, as did a wretch go,
With ready corde out of his life to ſpede,
His ſtumbling foot did ſynde an hoorde, lo,
Of gold, I ſay, where he preparde this dede
And in exchange, he left the corde tho'
He that hid the golde, and found it not,
Of that he found he ſhapt his kneck a knot.

Deſcription of a gonne.

Vulcane begat me, Minerva me taught,
Nature my mother, craft nouriſht me yere by yere
Three bodies are my foode; my ſtrength is in naught,
Anger, wrath, waſte, and noyſe, are my children dere.
Geſſe frende, what I am, and how I am wraught,
Monſter of ſea or of lande, or of els where
Know me, and uſe me, and I may thee defend,
And if I be thine enemie I may thy life ende,

Wyat being in priſon to Bryan.

Sighes are my foode, my drink are my teares,
Clinking of ſetters would ſuch muſike crave,
Stink, and cloſe ayre, away my life it weares,
Poor innocence is all the hope I have,
Rayne, wynde, or weather, judge I by myne eare,
Malice aſſautes that righteouſneſſe ſhould have.
Sure am I, Bryan, this wound ſhall heale againe,
But yett, alas! the ſkarre ſhall ſtill remaine.

Of diſſembling woords.

Throughout the world if it were ſought,
Fayre words ynoughe a man ſhall fynde;
They be good chepe, they coſt right nought,
Their ſubſtance is but only wynde:
But well to ſay, and ſo to meane,
That ſwete accorde is ſeldome ſene.

Of the mean and ſure eſtate.

Stand whoſo lis upon the ſlipper wheele,
Of high eſtate, and let me here rejoyce,
And uſe my life in quietneſſe eche dele,
Unknowne in court that hath the wanton joyes,
In hidden place my time ſhall ſlowly paſſe,
And when my yeres be paſt without annoyſe,
Let me dye old after the common trace,
For grypes of death do he too hardly paſs;
That knowne is to all, but to himſelf, alas!
He dyeth unknown daſed with dreadfull face.

The courtiers life.

In court to ſerve decked with freſhe araye,
Of ſugared meates feling the ſwete repaſt,

The lyfe in bankets and ſundry kyndes of playe.
Amid the preſſe the worldly lookes to waſte.
Hath with it joined of times ſuch bitter taſte,
That who ſo joyes ſuch kinde of life to holde,
In priſon joyes fettred with chaines of golde,

Of diſappointed purpoſe by negligence.

Of Carthage he that worthy warriour,
Could overcome, but could not uſe his chance
And I likewyſe of all my long endeavour,
The ſharp conqueſt though fortune did avance,
Ne could I uſe, the hold that is given over.
I unpoſſeſſe, ſo hangeth now in balance.
Of warre, my peace, rewarde of all my payne,
At Mountzon thus I reſtleſs reſt in Spaine.

Of his returne from Spayne.

Tagus farewell that weſtward with thy ſtremes,
Turnes up the graines of golde already tryde,
For I with ſpurre and ſaile go ſeke the Temmes,
Gayneward the ſunne that ſheweth her welthy pride;
And to the towne that Brutus ſought by dreames,
Like bended moon that leaves her luſty ſyde,
My king, my country, I ſeke for whom I live,
O mighty Jove the wyndes for this me geve.

Of ſodaine truſting.

Driven by deſyre I did this ded,
To danger my ſelf without cauſe why,
To truſt th' untrue not lyke to ſpede,
To ſpeake and promiſe faithfully.
But now the prooſe doth verify,
That who ſo truſteth ere he know,
Doth hurt himſelf and pleaſe his foe.

Of the mother that eat her child at the ſiege of Jeruſalem.

In doubtfull breſt whyles motherly pitty,
With furious famine ſtandeth at debate
The mother faith, O child unhappy,
Return thy blood where thou hadſt milke of late.
Yeld me thoſe lymmes that I made unto thee,
And enter there where thou wer generate,
For of one body againſt all nature,
To another muſt I make ſepulture.

Of the meane and ſure eſtate, written to John Poynes.

My mothers maides when they do ſow and ſpinne,
They ſing a ſong made of a fieldiſh mouſe,
That for becauſe her livelod was but thinne,
Would needs go ſee her townish ſiſters houſe.
She tought her ſelf endurde to grievous payne,
The ſtormy blaſtee her cave ſo ſore did ſouſe;
That when the furrous ſwimmed with the rayne,
She muſt lye cold and wet in ſory plight,
And worſe then that bare meate ther did remayne,
To comfort her, when ſhe her houſe had dight.
Some tyme a barley corne, ſome time a beane,
For which ſhe laboured hard both day and night.
In harveſt tyme, whyle ſhe might go and gleane,
And when her ſtore was ſtroyed with the floode,
Then welaway for ſhe undone was clene,
Then was ſhe faine to take inſtede of foode
Slepe if ſhe might, her hunger to begyle,
My ſiſter, quoed ſhe, hath a living good,
And hence from me ſhe dwelleth not a myle;
In colde and ſtorme ſhe lyeth warm and drye
In bed of downe, the durt doth not defyle
Her tender foot, ſhe labours not as I.
Richely ſhe ſedes and at the riche mannes coſt,
And for her meate ſhe nedes not crave nor cry,
By ſea, by land, of delicates the moſt
Her cater ſekes, and ſpareth for no perell,
She ſedes on boyld meate, bake meate and on roſt,
And hath therefore no whit of charge nor travell
And when ſhe liſt, the licour of the grape
Doth glad her heart, till that her belly ſwell;
And at this journey makes ſhe but a jape,
So forth ſhe goes, truſting of all this wealth,
With her ſiſter her part ſo for to ſhape,
That if ſhe might there kepe herſelf in health,
To live a lady while her life doth laſt,
And to the dore now is ſhe come by ſtealth,
And with her foote anone ſhe ſcrapes full faſt,
Th' other for feare durſt not well ſcarce appeare
Of every noiſe ſo was the wretch agaſt
At laſt, ſhe aſked ſoftly who was there,
And in her language as well as ſhe could,
Pepe (quod the other) ſiſter I am here.
Peace (quod the towne mouſe) why ſpeakeſt thou ſo loude,
And by the hand ſhe took her fayre and well,
Welcome, quod ſhe, my ſiſter by the roode,
She feaſted her, that joy it was to tell,
The fayre they had, they drank the wyne ſo clere,
And as to purpoſe now and then it fell
She chered her, with how ſiſter what chere?
Amid this joy befell a ſory chance,
That welaway, the ſtranger bought full dere,
The fare ſhe had, for as ſhe lookte a ſkunce,
Under a ſtole ſhe ſpied two ſteming eyes
In a rounde heade with ſharp eares: In France
Was never mouſe ſo ſerde, for the unwyſe
Had not yſene ſuch a beaſt before,
Yet had nature taught her after guyſe
To know her foe, and dread him evermore;
The towne mouſe fled, ſhe knew whither to go,
The other had no ſhift, but wonders ſore,
Ferde of her life, at home ſhe wiſht her tho',
And to do, alas! as ſhe did ſkippe, [was ſo,
The heaven it would, lo! and eke her chaunce
At the threſholde her ſely foote did trippe,
And ere ſhe might recover it again,
The traytour cat had caught her by the hippe,

And made her there againſt her will remayne,
That had forgot her poore ſuertie, and reſt,
Forſeking welth, wherein ſhe thought to raygne.
Alas! (my Poynes) how men do ſeke the beſt,
And finde the worſe, by error as they ſtaye;
And no marvell, when ſight is ſo oppreſt,
And blindes the guyde, anone out of the way
Goeth guyde, and all in ſeking quiet life.
O wretched myndes! there is no golde that may,
Graunt that you ſeek, no warre, no peace, no ſtriſe,
No, no, although thy head were hoopte with gold,
berjeant with mace, with hawbert, ſword, nor knife,
Can not repulſe the care that folow ſhould,
Eche kynde of lyfe hath with him his diſeaſe,
Live in delites, even as thy luſt woulde,
And thou ſhalt finde when luſt doth moſt thee pleaſe,
It yrketh ſtraight, and by itſelf doth faſe.
A ſmall thing is that, that may thy minde appeaſe:
None of you all there is, that is ſo madde
To ſeke for grapes on brambles, or on briers,
For none I trow, that hath a witte ſo badde
To ſet his hay for conies over rivers,
Nor ye ſet not a dragge net for an hare;
And yet the thing that moſt is your deſire,
You do miſlike, with more travell and care
Make plaine thine heart that it be not knotted
With hope or dreade, and ſee thy will be bare
From all affectes, whom vyce hath never ſpotted;
Thyſelf content with that is thee aſſynde,
And uſe it well that is to thee allotted:
Then ſeke no more out of thy ſelf to fynde
The thing that thou haſt ſought ſo long before;
For thou ſhalt feele it ſticking in thy mynde
Made, if ye liſt to continue your ſore,
Let preſent paſſe, and gape on time to come,
And depe thy ſelf in travell more and more,
Henceforth (my Poynes) this ſhall be all and ſome,
Thoſe wretched fooles ſhall have nought els of me:
But, to the great God, and to his dome,
None other payne pray I for them to be,
But when the rage doth leade them from the right
That looking backward vertue they may ſee
Even as ſhe is ſo goodly, fayre and bright;
And whylſt they claſpe theyr luſts in armes acroſſe,
Graunt them, good Lord, as thou maiſt of thy might,
To freat inward, for loſing ſuch a loſt.

Of the courtiers life, written to John Poynes.

Myne own, John Poynes, ſins ye delight to know
The cauſes why that homeward I me draw,
And flee the preaſe of courtes, whereſo they goe,
Rather then to live thrall under the awe
Of lordly lookes, wrapped within my cloke,
To will and luſt learning to ſet a law
It is not, that becauſe I ſtorme or mocke
The power of them whom fortune here hath lent
Charge over us, of right to ſtrike the ſtroke;
But true it is, that I have always ment
Leſs to eſteeme them, then the common ſort,
Of outward thinges that judge in their entent:
Without regarde, what inward doth reſort,
I graunt, ſome time of glory that the fyre,
Doth touch my heart, me liſt not to report.
Blame by honour and honour to deſyre.
But how may I this honour now attaine,
That cannot dye the colour blacke a lyer?
My Poynes, I cannot frame my tune to fayn.
To cloke the truth, for praiſe without deſert,
Of them that liſt all vice for to retayne,
I cannot bonour them that ſet theyr part
With Venus and Bacchus all their life long.
Nor hold my peace of them, although I ſmart,
I cannot crouche nor knele to ſuch a wronge.
To worſhip them like God on earth alone,
That are as wolves theſe ſely lambes among,
I cannot with my woordes complayne and mone.
And ſuffer nought nor ſmart without complaint,
Nor turne the word that from my mouth is gone,
I cannot ſpeak and looke like a ſaint.
Uſe wyles for wit, and make deſceit a pleaſure,
Call craft counſaile, for lucre ſtill to paynt,
I can not wreſt the law to fyll the coffer
With innocent blood to feed my ſelf fatte,
And do moſt hurt where that moſt helpe I offer.
I am not he that can allow the ſtate,
Of hye Cæſer, and damne Cato to dye,
That with his death could ſcape out of the gate,
From Cæſer's hands, if Livy doth not lye.
And would not live where liberty was loſt,
So did his heart the common wealth apply,
I am not he, ſuch eloquence to boſt,
To make the crow in ſinging, as the ſwanne;
Nor call the lyon of coward beaſtes the moſt,
That cannot take a mouſe, as the cat can,
And he that dyeth for honger of the golde,
Call him Alexander, and ſay that Pan
Paſſeth Apollo in muſike many folde,
Praiſe Syr Copas for a noble tale,
And ſcorne the ſtory that the knight tolde,
Praiſe him for counſell that is dronke of ale.
Grinne when he laughes, that beareth all the ſway,
Frowne when he frownes, and grone when he is pale;
On others luſt, to hang both night and day,
None of theſe pointes would ever frame in me,
My wit is nought, I can not learn the way,
And much the leſs of things that greater be.
That aſken helpe of colours to deviſe,
To joyne the meane with eche extremitie,
With nereſt vertue ay to cloke the vyce,
And as to purpoſe likewiſe it ſhall fall,
To preſſe the vertue that it may not ryſe.
As dronkenneſs good felowſhip to call,
The frendly foe with his faire double face,
Say he is gentle, and curties therewithall,
Affirme that favill hath a goodly grace.
In eloquence, and cruelty to name,
Zeale of juſtice, and change in time and place,
And he that ſuffereth offence without blame,
Call him pitieſull, and him true and playne,
That rayleth rechleſs unto eche mans ſhame,

Say he is rude, that cannot lye and fayne.
The lecher a lover and tyranny
To be right of a princes raigne,
I cannot, I, no, no, it will not be.
This is the cauſe that I could never yet
Hang on their ſleves the weigh (as thow maiſt ſee)
A chippe of chaunce, more then a pound of wit;
This makes me at home to hunt and hawke,
And in foul weather at my book to ſit;
In froſt and ſnow, then with my bowe ſtalke;
No man doth marke whereſo I ryde or goe;
In luſty leas at libertie I walke.
And of theſe newes I ſele no weale no woe,
Save that a clogge doth hang yett at my hele;
No force for that, for that is ordred ſo,
That I may leape both hedge and dyke full wele.
I am not now in France to judge the wyne,
With ſavery ſauce thoſe delicates to ſeel,
Nor yet in Spayne, where one muſt him incline,
Rather then to be, outwardly to ſeme,
I meddle not with wittes that be ſo fyne,
Nor Flanders chere lettes not my ſight to deme,
Of black and white nor taket my wittes away,
With beaſtlineſs, ſuch doc thoſe beaſtes eſteme,
Nor I am not, where truth is geven in pray
For money, pryſon, and treaſon, of ſome
A common practice uſed night and daye;
But I am here in Kent and Chriſtendome,
Among the muſes, where I reade and ryme,
Where if thou liſt, mine own John Poynes to come,
Thou ſhalt be judge, how I do ſpende my tyme.

How to uſe the court and himſelf therin, written to Syr Fraunces Bryan.

A SPENDING hend that alway powreth out,
Had nede to have a bringer in as faſt,
And on the ſtone that ſtill doth turne about,
There groweth no moſſe: Theſe proverbes yet doe laſt.
Reaſon hath ſet them in ſo ſure a place,
That length of yeres their force can never waſte:
When I remember this, and eke the caſe
Wherein thou ſtandſt, I thought forthwith to write
(Bryan) to thee, who knowes how great a grace,
In writing is to counſayle man the right;
To thee, therefore, that trottes ſtyll up and downe,
And never reſts but running day and night,
From realme to realme, from citie, ſtrete, and towne;
Why doeſt thou weare thy body to the bones,
And mighteſt at home ſlepe in thy bedde of downe,
And drinke good ale ſo nappy for the nones,
Fede thyſelf fatte and heape up pounde by pound,
Lykeſt thou not this? no, why? for ſwine ſo groines
In ſtye, and chaw dung moulded on the ground,
And drivel on pearles, with head ſtill in the manger,
So of the harpe the aſſe doth heare the ſound,
So ſackes of durt be filde. The neat courtier
So ſerves for leſſe, then do theſe fatted ſwine,
Though I ſeme leane and drye without a moiſter,
Yet will I ſerve my prince, my lord, and thyne,
And let them live to fede the paunch that liſt,
So may I live to fede both me and myne,
By God well ſayd. But what and if thou wiſt
How to bring in, as faſt as thou doeſt ſpende
That would I learne, and it ſhall not be miſt
To tell the how. Now harke what I intende
Thou knoweſt well firſt, who ſo can ſeke to pleaſe,
Shal purchaſe frendes, where trouth ſhall but offende,
Flee therefore truth, it is both welth and eaſe,
For though that trouth of every man hath praiſe,
Full neare that wynde goth trouth in great miſeaſe,
Uſe vertue, as it goeth now a dayes,
In woord alone to make thy language ſwete,
And of the dede, yet doe not as thou ſayes,
Els be thou ſure, thou ſhalt he farre unmete,
To geat thy bread, eche thing is now ſo ſkant,
Seke ſtill thy profit upon thy bare fete,
Lend in no wiſe for fear that thou do want;
Unleſs it be, as to a calfe a cheſe,
But if thou can be ſure to win a cant
Of half at leaſt, it is not good to leeſe.
Learne at the ladde, that in a long white cote,
From under the ſtall withouten landes or fee,
Hath lept into the ſhoppe, who knowes by rote,
This rule that I have tolde thee here before,
Sometime alſo riche age begynnes to dote,
Se thou when there thy gayne may be the more,
Stay him by the arme where ſo he walk or goe,
Be nere alway, and if he cough to ſore,
What he hath ſpyt treade out, and pleaſe him ſo
A diligent knave that pykes his maiſters purſe
May pleaſe him ſo, that he withouten mo,
Executour is, and what is he the worſe,
But if ſo chance, thou get nought of the man,
The widow may for all thy payne diſburſe
A riveled ſkinne, a ſtinking breath, what than?
A tootheleſſe mouth ſhall doe thy lippes no harme;
The gold is good, and though ſhe curſe or banne,
Yet where thee liſt, thou mayſt lye good and warme;
Let the old mule byte upon the brydle,
Whilſt there do lye a ſweter in thine arme,
In this alſo ſee that thou be not ydle,
Thy nece, thy coſin, ſiſter, or thy daughter,
If ſhe be fayre, if hanſome be her middle,
If thy better hath her love beſought her,
Avaunce his cauſe and he ſhall helpe thy nede
It is but love, turne thou it to a laughter.
But ware I ſay, ſo gold the helpe and ſpede,
That in this caſe thou be not ſo unwyſe,
As pander was in ſuch a lyke dede,
For he the foole of conſcience was ſo nyce,
That he no gayne would have for all his payne;
Be next thy ſelfe, for friendſhip bears no pryce.
Laugheſt thou at me? why, do I ſpeak in vayne?
No, not at thee, but at thy thryſty jeſt;
Wouldeſt thou, I ſhoulde for any loſſe or gayne
Change that for golde that I have tane for beſt?
Next godly thinges, to have an honeſt name,
Should I leave that then take me for a beaſt.
Nay then farewel, ane if thou care for ſhame
Content the with honeſt povertie,
With free tong, what thee miſlykes, to blame

And for thy trouth ſome time adverſitie,
And therewithall this gyft I ſhall thee give,
In this world now little proſperitie,
And quoyne to kepe, as water in a ſive.

The ſong of Jopas unfiniſhed.

When Dido feaſted furſt the wandring Trojan knight,
Whom Junos wrath with ſtormes did force in Libik ſands to light.
That mighty Atlas taught the ſupper laſting long,
With criſped lockes, in golden harpe Jopas ſang in ſong: [and name.
That ſame (quod he) that we the world do call
Of heaven and earth with all contentes, it is the very frame:
Of thus, of heavenly powers by more powre kept in one,
Repugnant kindes, in middes of whom the earth hath place alone. [and nourſe,
Firme, rounde, of living things the mother, place
Without the which in egall weight this heaven doth hold his courſe. [ven,
And it is calde by name, the firſt and moving hea-
The firmament is placed next, containg other ſeven.
Of heavenly powers that ſame is planted full and thicke,
As ſhining lights, which we call ſtarres, that therein cleave and ſticke.
With great ſwift ſway the fyrſt, and with his reſtleſs fours, [nual cours.
Carieth itſelf, and all thoſe eyght in even conti-
And of this world ſo round within that rolling caſe,
Two points there be that never move, but firmly kepe their place.
The tone we ſee alway, the tother ſtands object,
Againſt the ſame divyding juſt, the ground by line direct. [th' other,
Which by ymagination, drawne from the one to
Toucheth the centre of the earth, for way there is none other, [not bright,
And theſe becalde the poles, deſcride by ſtarres
Artike the one northward we ſee, Antartike thother hight
The lyne, that we deyſe from thone to thother ſo,
As axell is, upon which the heavens about do go,
Which of water nor earth, of ayre nor fyre have kinde;
Therefore the ſubſtance of thoſe ſame were hard for man to find;
But they been uncorupt, ſimple and pure unmixt;
And ſo we ſay been all thoſe ſtarres, that in the ſame be fixt;
And eke thoſe erring ſeven, in cyrcle as they ſtray,
So calde, becauſe againſt that fyrſt they have repugnant way,
And ſmaller by ways too, ſcant ſenſible to man,
To buſy woorke for my poor harpe, let ſing then he that can,
The wydeſt ſave the fyrſt of all theſe nyne above,
One hundred yere doth aſke of ſpace for one degree to move:
Of which decrees we make in the fyrſt moving heaven,
Three hundred and threeſcore in partes, juſtly divided even;
And yet there is another between theſe heavens two, [for now.
Whoſe moving is ſo ſlye ſo ſlacke, I name it not
The ſeventh heaven, or the ſhell next to the ſtarry ſkye, [ſo ſlie,
All thoſe degrees that gathered up with aged pace,
And doth perfourme the ſame, as elders count hath bene,
In nine and twenty yeres complete, and days almoſt ſixteen,
Do carye in his bought the ſtarre of Saturne olde,
A threatner of all living things with drought, and with his cold, [paſe,
The ſixt whom this conteins, doth ſtalke with yonger
And in twelve yere doth ſome what more then thothers vyage was, [nigne,
And thys in it doth beare the ſtarre of Jove be-
Twene Saturnes malice, and us men, friendly defending ſigne; [dayes,
The fifth beares bloudy Mars, that in three hundred
And twiſe eleven with one full yere hath finiſh't all thoſe wayes. [ſixe;
A yere doth aſke the fourth, and howers therto
And in the ſame the dayes eye, the ſune therein he ſtickes: [me,
The thyrd that governde is by that, that governs
And love for love, and for no love provokes, as oft we ſee. [the tother,
In like ſpace doth perfourme that courſe, that dyd
So doth the next, the next unto the ſame, that ſecond is in order.
But it doth beare the ſtarre, that calde is Mercury,
That many a craſty ſecret ſteppe doth tread, as Calcars trye, [gone
That ſkye is laſt, and fixt next us thoſe wayes hath
In ſeven and twenty common days, and eke the third one; [about.
And beareth with his ſway the dyvers moone
Now bright, now brown, now bent, now full, and now her light is out:
Thus have they of their owne two movinges all theſe ſeven,
One, wherein they be carried ſtill, eche in his ſeveral heaven: [layde
Another of themſelves, where theyr bodies be
In by waies, and in leſſer roundes, as I afore have ſayde, [the ſtreight,
Save of them all the ſunne doth ſtray leaſt from
The ſtarry ſkye hath but one courſe, that we have calde the eight.
And all theſe movinges eyght are ment from weſt to eaſt, [eaſt to weſt;
Although they ſeeme to clyme aloft, I ſay from
But that is but by force of theyr firſt moving ſkye,
In twiſe twelve howres from eaſt to eaſt that carrieth them by and by.
But marke me well alſo, the moving of theſe ſeven, [heaven;
Be not about the axletree of the fyrſt moving
For they have theyr two poles directly tone to the tother.

UNCERTAINE AUCTORS.

SONGES AND SONETTES.

A praiſe of his ladie.

Geve place you ladies and be gone,
Boaſt not your ſelves at all,
For here at hande approcheth one,
Whoſe face will ſtayne you all.
The vertue of her lively lookes
Excels the precious ſtone,
I wiſhe to have none other bookes
To reade or look upon.
In eche of her two chriſtal eyes,
Smyleth a naked boy;
It would you all in heart ſuffiſe
To ſee that lampe of joye.
I think nature hath loſt the moulde,
Where ſhe her ſhape did take;
Or elſe I doubte if nature coulde
So fayre a creature make.
She may be well comparde
Unto the Phenix kinde,
Whoſe like was never ſeene nor heard,
That any man can fynde.
In lyfe ſhe is Diana chaſt
In trouth Penelopey,
In woord and eke in dede ſtedfaſt;
What will you more we ſay:
If all the world were ſought ſo farre,
Who could finde ſuch a wight,
Her beauty twinkleth lyke a ſtarre
Within the froſty night.
Her roſeall coulour comes and goes,
With ſuch a comely grace,
More ruddier too, then doth the roſe,
Within her lively face.
At Bacchus feaſt none ſhall her mete,
Ne at no wanton playe,
Nor gaſing in an open ſtrete,
Nor gadding as aſtray.
The modeſt myrth that ſhe doth uſe,
Is mixt with ſhamefaſtneſſe,
All vyce ſhe doth wholy refuſe,
And hateth ydleneſſe.
O lord it is a world to ſee,
How vertue can repayre,
And decke in her ſuch modeſtie,
Whome nature made ſo fayre.
Truely ſhe doth as farre excede,
Our women now adayes,
As doth the jelifloure, a wede,
And more a thouſand wayes
How might I doe to get a graffe
Of this unſpotted tree:
For all the reſt are playne but chaffe
Which ſeme good corne to bee.
This gyft alone I ſhall her geve,
When death doth what he can,
Her honeſt fame ſhall ever live,
Within the mouth of man.

They of the meane eſtate are happieſt.

If right be raſt and overronne,
And power take part with open wronge,
If ſpare by force do yeld to ſone,
The lacke is like to laſt to long.
If God for goodes ſhal be unplaced,
If right for riches loſes hys ſhape,
If world for wiſedome be embraced,
The geſſe is great much hurt may hap.
Among good things I prove and finde,
The quiet lyfe doth moſt abound,
And ſure to the contented mynde
There is no riches may be founde.
For riches hates to be content,
Rule is enemy to quietneſſe,
Power is moſt part impacient,
And ſeldome lykes to live in peace.
I heard a heardman once compare,
That quiet nights he had mo ſlept
And had mo merydayes to ſpare,
Then he which ought the beaſt he kept.
I would not have it thought hereby,
The dolphin ſwimme I mean to teach,
Nor yet to learne the fawlcon flye
I rowe not ſo farre paſt my reache.

But as my part above the reſt,
Is well to wiſh and well to will,
So tyll my breath ſhall fayle my breſt,
I will not ceaſe to wiſh you ſtill.

Upon conſideration of the ſtate of this life he wiſhed death.

The longer life the more offence
The more offence the greater paine,
The greater paine the leſſe defence,
The leſſe defence the leſſer gaine:
The loſs of gaine long yll doth trye,
Wherefore come death and let me dye.
The ſhorter life, leſſe count I finde,
The leſs account the ſooner made,
The account ſoon made, the merier mind,
The merier mynd doth thought evade;
Short life in truth this thing doth trye,
Wherefore come death and let me dye.
Com gentle death, the ebbe of care,
The ebbe of care, the flood of life,
The flood of life, the joyful fare,
The joyful fare, the end of ſtrife,
The end of ſtrife, that thing wiſh I.
Wherefore come death and let me dye.

The lover that once diſdained love, is now become ſubject being caught in his ſnare.

To this my ſong give eare who liſt
And mine entent judge as ye will,
The time is come that I have miſt
The thing whereon I hoped ſtyll,
And from the toppe of all my truſt
Myſhap hath throwen me in the duſt.
The time hath been and that of late,
My hart and I might leap at large;
And was not ſhut within the gate
Of love's deſire, nor took no charge
Of any thing that did pertaine,
As touching love in any paine.
My thought was free my hart was lyght
I marked not who loſt, who faught,
I plaide by day, I ſlept by night,
I forced not, who wept, who laught,
My thought from all ſuch things was free,
And I my ſelf at libertie.
I toke no hede to tauntes nor toys
As leef to ſee them frowne as ſmyle,
Where fortune laught I ſcorude their joyes
I found their fraudes and every wyle,
And to my ſelf oft tymes I ſmyled.
To ſee how love had them begiled.
Thus in the net of my conceit,
I maſked ſtill among the fort
Of ſuch as fed upon the bayte
That Cupide laide for his diſport,
And ever as I ſaw them caught
I them beheld and thereat laught.
Tyll at the length when Cupide ſpied
My ſcorneful wyll and ſpiteful uſe,
And how I paſt not who was tyed
So that my ſelf myght ſtill live loſe,
He ſet himſelf to lye in waite
And in my way he threw a baite.
Such one as nature never made
I dare well ſay ſave ſhe alone,
Such one ſhe was as would invade
A hart more hard then marble ſtone,
Such one ſhe is, I know it right,
Her nature made to ſhew her might.
Then as a man in a maſe
When uſe of reaſon is away,
So I began to ſtare and gaſe
And ſodeinly, without delay
Or ever I had the wit to loke
I ſwallowed up both bait and hooke.
Which daily grieves me more and more
By ſundry ſortes of careful wo,
And none alive may ſalve the ſore
But only ſhe that hurt me ſo,
In whom my lyfe dothe now conſiſt
To ſave or ſlay me as ſhe lyſt.
But ſeeyng now that I am caught
And bounde ſo faſt I cannot flee.
Be ye by myne enſample taught
That in your fanſies fele you free
Deſpyſe not them that lovers are
Leſt you be caught within his ſnare.

Harpalus complaint of Phillides love beſtowed on Corin, who loved her not, and denied him that loved her.

Phillida was a fayre mayde
As freſh as any flowre
Whom Harpalus the heardman prayde
To be his paramour.
Harpalus and eke Corin
Were herdmen both yfere:
And Phillida could twiſt and ſpinne,
And thereto ſing full clere
But Phillida was all to coy
For Harpalus to winne,
For Corin was her only joy
Who forſt her not a pinne.
How often would ſhe flowers twine,
How often garlandes make
Of couſlips and of columbine,
And all for Corins ſake.
But Corin he had hawkes to lure
And forced more the field,
Of lovers law he took no cure
For once he was begylde.
If Harpalus prevayled mought,
His labour all was loſt,
For he was fartheſt from her thought,
And yet he loved her moſt.
Therefore waxt he both pale and leane
And drye as clod of clay,
His fleſh it was conſumed cleane,
His colour gone away.

His beard it had not long be ſhave,
His heare hong all unkempt,
A man moſt fit even for the grave
Whom ſpitefull love had ſpent.
His eyes were read, and all forewatched,
His face beſprent with teares,
It ſemde unhap had him long hatched,
In middes of hys diſpayres.
His cloaths were black and alſo bare,
As one forlorne was he,
Upon his head he alwaies ware
A wreathe of willowe tree,
His beaſtes he kept upon a hill,
And he ſate in the dale,
And thus with ſighs and ſorrows ſhrill
He gan to tell his tale.
Oh Harpalus (thus would he ſay)
Unhappieſt under ſonn,
The cauſe of thine unhappy day
By love was fyrſt begunne.
For thou wentſt firſt by ſute to ſeeke
A tygre to make tame.
That ſettes not by thy love a leeke
But makes thy griefe her game.
As eaſy it were for to convert
The froſt into the flame,
As for to turne a froward hart,
Whom thou ſo feign wouldeſt frame.
Corin he liveth careleſſe,
He leapes among the leaves,
He eates the fruites of thy redreſſe.
Thou reapes, he takes the ſheaves.
My beaſtes awhile your foode refraine,
And harke your heardſman's ſounde;
Whome ſpightful love alas! hath ſlayne,
Through gyrt with many a wounde.
O happly be ye beaſtes wild,
That here your paſtures takes;
I ſee that ye be not begylde,
Of theſe your faithful mates.
The hart he feedeth by the hinde,
The buck hard by the do;
The turtle dove is not unkinde.
To him that loves her ſo.
The ewe ſhe hath by her the ramme,
The young cow hath the bull;
The calfe with many a luſty lambe,
Doe feed their hunger full.
But well away that nature wrought
Thee Phillida ſoe faire;
For I may ſay that I have bought
Thy beauty all to deare.
What reaſon is that cruelrie,
With beauty ſhould have part:
Or elſe that ſuch great tyranny,
Should dwell in woman's hart.
I ſee therefore to ſhappe my death
She cruelly is preſt.
To th' ende that I may want my breath,
My days been at the beſt.
O Cupide, graunt this my requeſt,
And do not ſtoppe thine eares;
That ſhe may feel within her breſt,
The paynes of my deſpayres.
Of Corin that is careleſſe
That ſhe may crave her ſee,
As I have done in great diſtreſſe
That loved her faithfully.
But ſince that I ſhall dye her ſlave,
Her ſlave and eke her thrall;
Write you my friendes upon my grave,
This chaunce that is befall.
Here lyeth unhappy Harpalus,
By cruell love now ſlaine;
Whom Phillida unjuſtly thus,
Hath murdred with diſdaine.

Of the death of Philips.

Bewaile with me all ye that have profeſt
Of muſicke th' arte, by touch of coarde or wind,
Lay down your lutes and let your gytterns reſt
Philips is dead whoſe like you cannot fynde,
Of muſicke much exceeding all the reſt;
Muſes therefore of force now muſt ye wreſt
Your pleaſant notes into another ſounde,
The ſtring is broke, the lute is diſpoſſeſt,
The hande is colde, the body in the ground,
The lowring lute lamenteth now therfore,
Philips her frende, that can her touche no more.

That all things ſometime finde eaſe of thyr payne, ſave only the lover.

I see there is no ſort
Of things that live in griefe,
Which at ſometime may not reſort
Whereas they have reliefe,
The ſtricken dere by kinde
Of death that ſtands in awe,
For his recure an herb can fynde,
The arrowe to withdrawe.
The chaſed dere hath ſoyle,
To coole him in his heate;
The aſſe after his wery toyle,
In ſtable is up ſet.
The cony hath his cave,
The little byrd his neſt,
From heate and colde themſelves to ſave,
At all times as they liſt
The owle with feble ſight,
Lyes lurking in the leaves,
The ſparrow in the froſty night
May ſhroude her in the eaves.
But wo to me, alas,
In ſunne nor yet in ſhade,
I cannot find a reſting place,
My burden to unlade.
But day by day ſtill beares
The burden on my backe,
With weeping eyen and watry teares,
To holde my hope aback.
All things I ſee have place,
Wherein they bowe or bende,
Save this, alas, my woful caſe,
Which no where fyndeth ende.

The aſſaute of Cupide upon the fort where the lovers hart lay wounded, and how he was taken.

WHEN Cupide ſcaled fyrſt the fort,
Wherein my heart lay wounded ſore,
The batry was of ſuch a ſort
That I muſt yelde or dye therefore.
There ſaw I love upon the wall,
How he his banner dyd diſplay,
Alarme, alarme, he 'gan to call,
And bade his ſouldiours kepe aray.
The armes the which that Cupide bare,
Were pearced heartes with tears beſprent,
In ſilver and ſable to declare
The ſtedfaſt love he always ment.
There myght you ſee his hand all dreſt,
In colours like to whyte and blacke,
With powder and with pellets preſt,
To bring the forte, to ſpoyle and ſacke.
Good while the maiſter of the ſhot,
Stoode in the rampyre brave and proude,
For ſpence of powder he ſpared not,
Aſſaulte, aſſaulte, to cry aloude.
There myght you heare the cannons rore;
Eche piece diſcharged a lover's looke,
Which had the power to rent, and tore
In any place whereas they tooke.
And even with the trumpets ſowne,
The ſcaling ladders were up ſet,
And beauty walked up and downe,
With bow in hand and arrowes whet.
Then fyrſt deſyre began to ſcale
And ſhrowed him under his targe,
As one the worthieſt of them all,
And apteſt for to give the charge.
Then puſhed ſouldiours with theyr pykes;
And holbarders with handy ſtrokes,
The hargabuſhe in fleſhe it lightes,
And dims the ayre with miſty ſmokes.
And as it is now ſouldiers uſe,
When ſhot and powder gins to want,
I hanged up my flag of truce,
And pleaded for my lyves graunt.
When fancy thus had made her breache,
And beauty entred with her bande,
With bag and baggage ſely wretch,
I yelded into beauties hand.
Then beauty bad to blow retrete,
And every ſouldiour to retyre,
And mercy mylde with ſpede to ſet
Me captive bound as priſoner.
Madame (quoth I) ſith that this day
Hath ſerved you at all aſſayes,
I yelde to you without delay,
Here of the fortreſſe all the kayes.
And ſith that I have been the marke,
At whom you ſhot at with your eye,
Nedes muſt you with your handy warke,
Or ſalve my ſore, or let me dye.

The aged lover renounceth love.

BROTHE that I dyd love,
In youth that I thought ſwete,
As time requires for my behove,
Methinks they are not mete.
My luſtes they do me leave,
My fancies all are fled,
And tract of time begynnes to weave
Gray heares upon my hed.
For age with ſtealing ſteppes
Hath clawde me with his crouche,
And luſty lyfe away ſhe leapes
As there had been none ſuch.
My muſe doth not delight
Me as ſhe dyd before,
My hand and pen are not in plight,
As they have been of yore.
For reaſon me denyes
This youthly ydle ryme.
And day by day to me cryes,
Leave of theſe toyes in tyme.
The wrinkles in my browe,
The furrows in my face,
Say lymping age will lodge hym now,
Where youth muſt geve him place.
The harbinger of death,
To me I ſee him ride,
The cough, the cold, the gaſping breath
Doth byd me to provyde.
A pickax and a ſpade,
And eke a ſhrowding ſhete,
A houſe of clay for to be made,
For ſuch a geaſt moſt mete.
Methinkes I hear the clarke
That knoles the carefull knell,
And byddes me leave my woful warke,
Ere nature me compell.
My kepers knit the knot,
That youth did laugh to ſkorne,
Of me that cleane ſhall be forgot,
As I had not been borne.
Thus muſt I youth geve up,
Whoſe badge I long dyd weare,
To them I yelde the wanton cup,
That better may it beare.
Lo, here the bare hed ſkull,
By whoſe balde ſigne I know,
That ſtouping age away ſhall pull,
Which youthful yeres did ſowe.
For beauty with her band
Theſe croked cares hath wrought,
And ſhipped me into the land,
From whence I fyrſt was brought.
And ye that byde behinde,
Have ye none other truſt
As ye of clay were caſt by kynd,
So ſhall ye waſte to duſt.

Of the death of Sir Thomas Wyat the Elder.

Lo, dead! he lives, that whilome lived here,
Among the dead, that quick goes on the ground,
Though he be dead, yet quick he doth appeare
By lively name, that death cannot confound,
His lyfe for ay of fame the trump ſhall ſound,
Though he be dead, yet lives he here alive,
Thus can no death from Wyat life deprive.

Of a new married ſtudient that plaied faſt or loſe.

A STUDIENT, at his boke ſo plaſt,
That welth he might have wonne,
From boke to wife did flete in haſt,
From welth to wo to runne,
Now, who hath plaid a feater caſt,
Since jugling firſt begonne?
In *knitting* of himſelf ſo *faſt*,
Himſelf he hath *undonne*.

The lover in deſpare, lamenteth his caſe.

ADIEU, deſert, how art thou ſpent?
Ah! dropping tears, how do ye waſh?
Ah! ſcalding ſighes, how be yee ſpent.
To pricke them forth that will not haſte?
Ah! pained hart, thou gapſt for grace,
Even then where pitie hath no place.
As eaſy it is the ſtony rocke
From place to place for to remove,
As by thy plaint for to provoke
A frozen hart from hate to love:
What ſhould I ſay? Such is thy lott,
To fawne on them that force thee not.
Thus mayſt thou ſafely ſay and ſweare,
That rigour raigneth and ruth doth faile,
In thankleſſe thoughts my thoughts do weare;
Thy truth, thy faith may nought availe;
For thy good will, why ſhould thou ſo;
Still graſt where grace it will not grow.
Alas! poor hart, thus haſt thou ſpent
Thy flowring time, thy pleaſant yeres,
With ſighing voice wepe and lament;
For of thy hope no fruite apperes:
Thy true meaning is paid with ſcorne,
That ever ſoweth and reapeth no corne.
And where thou ſeekeſt a quiet port,
Thou doſt but weigh againſt the winde;
For where thou gladdeſt wouldſt reſort,
There is no place for thee aſſinde:
Thy deſtiny hath ſett it ſo,
That thy true hart ſhould cauſe thy wo.

Of his maiſtreſſe, M. R.

IN bayes I boaſt, whoſe branche I beare,
Such joy therein I finde,
That to the death I ſhall it weare,
To eaſe my careleſſe minde.
In heat, in cold, both night and day,
Her virtue may be ſene,
When other fruits and flowers decay,
The bay yett grows full green;
Her beries fede the birdes full oft;
Her leves ſwete water make,
Her bowes be ſet in every loft
For their ſwete ſavours ſake:
The birdes do ſhroud them from the cold,
In her we daily ſee;
And men made arbers as they would,
Under the pleaſant tree.
It doth me good when I repaire
There, as theſe bayes do grow,
Where oft I walk to take the air,
It doth delight me ſo.
But lo I ſtand, as I were dumme,
Her beauty for to blaſe,
Wherewith my ſprites be overcome,
So long thereon I gaſe.
At laſt I turne unto my walke,
In paſſing to and fro,
And to my ſelfe I ſmile and talk,
And then away I go,
Why ſmileſt thou? ſay lookers on,
What pleaſure haſt thou found?
With that I am as cold as ſtone,
And ready for to ſounde,
Fie, fie for ſhame, ſayth fanſie than,
Pluck up thy fainted hart,
And ſpeak thou boldly like a man.
Shrink not for little ſmart,
Whereat I bluſh and change my cheare
My ſenſes wax ſo weak,
O God, think I, what make I here,
That never a word may ſpeake:
I dare not ſigh, leſt I be heard,
My lokes I ſtyly caſt,
And ſtill I ſtand, as out were ſcard,
Untill my ſtormes be paſt.
Then happy hap doth me revive,
The blood comes to my face;
A merrier man is not alive,
Then I am in that caſe
Thus after ſorow ſeke I reſt;
When fled is fancies fitt:
And though I be a homely geſt,
Before the bays I ſit;
Where I do watch till leaves do fall:
When winde the tree doth ſhake,
Then, though my branche be very ſmall,
My leafe away I take,
And then I go and clap my handes,
My heart doth leap for joy.
Theſe bayes do caſe me from my bands,
That long did me annoy;
For when I do behold the ſame,
Which makes ſo fair a ſhow,
I find therein my maiſtreſs name,
And ſee her virtues grow.

A praiſe of Maiſtreſſe R.

I HEARD when fame with thundring voice did
ſummon to appear
The chief of nature's children all, that kind hath
placed here.
To view what brute by virtue got their lives could
juſtly crave;
And bad them ſhew what praiſe by truth they
worthy were to have:
Wherewith I ſaw how Venus came and put her ſelf
in place,
And gave her ladies leave at large to ſtand and
plead their caſe;

Each one was called by name a row, in that aſſembly there,
That hence are gone or here remains, in court or other where:
A ſolemn ſilence was proclaim'd, the judges ſat and heard
What truth could tell, or craft could fain, and who ſhould be prefer'd:
Then beauty ſtept before the bar, whoſe breſt and neck was bare,
With hair truſt up, and on her head a caul of gold ſhe ware.
Thus Cupids thralles began the flock, whose hungry eyes did ſay,
That ſhe had ſtained all the dames, that preſent were that day.
For ere ſhe ſpake with whiſpering words, the praiſe was fild throughout,
And fancy forced common voice, thereat to give a ſhout.
Which cried to fame take forth thy trump, and ſound her praiſe on hy,
That glads the heart of every wight, that her beholds with eye.
What ſtir and rule (quod order than) do theſe rude people make?
We hold her beſt that ſhall deſerve a praiſe for virtues ſake.
This ſentence was no ſooner ſaid, but beauty therewith bluſht,
The noiſe did ceaſe, the hal was ſtill and every thing was huſht.
Then fineneſs thought by training talk to win that beauty loſt,
And whet her tongue with jolly words, and ſparred for no coſt;
Yet wantoneſſe could not abide, but broke her tale in haſt,
And peeviſh pride for peacocks plumes would needs be hieſt plaſt.
And therewithal came curiouſneſſe and carped out of frame,
The audience laught to hear the ſtriſe, as they beheld the ſame.
Yet reaſon ſoon appeas'd the brute, her reverence made and done,
She purchaſed favour for to ſpeak, and thus her tale begun.
Since bounty ſhall the garland wear, and crowned be by fame,
O happy judges call for her, for ſhe deſerves the fame.
Where temperance governs beauties flowers, and glory is not fought,
And ſhamefaced meekneſſe maſtreth pride, and virtue dwells in thought:
Bid her come forth, and ſhew her face, or elſe aſſent each one,
That true report ſhall grave her name in gold or marble-ſtone.
For all the world to read at will what worthyneſſe doth reſt,
In perfect pure unſpotted life, which ſhe hath here poſſeſt.
Then ſkill roſe up and ſought the praiſe, to find that if he might,
A perſon of ſuch honeſt name, that men ſhould praiſe of right:
This one I ſaw full ſadly ſit, and ſhrink her ſelfe a ſide,
Whoſe ſober looks did ſhew gifts her wively grace did hide.
Lo here (quoth ſkill, good people all) is lucres left alive,
And ſhe ſhall moſt accepted be, that leaſt for praiſe did ſtrive.
No longer fame could hold her peace, but blew a blaſte ſo highe,
That made an echo in the air, and ſounding through the ſkie;
The voice was loud, and thus it ſaid, come R. with happy days,
Thy honeſt life hath won the fame, and crowned thee with praiſe.
And when I heard my maiſtres named, I thruſt amids the throng,
And clapt my hands and wiſht of God, that ſhe might proſper long.

Songes written by N. G. of the Nine Muſes.

Imps of kyng Jove, and queen remembraunce lo
The ſiſters nine, the poets pleaſant feres.
Caliope doth ſtately ſtyle beſtowe,
And worthy praiſes payntes of prineely peres:
Clion in ſolemn ſonges reneweth all day,
With preſent yeres conjoyning age by paſt,
Delightful talke loves comical Thaley,
In freſh grene youth, who doth lyke lawrel laſt:
With voices tragicall, ſoundes Melpomen
And as with cheynes thallured eare ſhe byndes.
Her ſtringes, when Terpeſcor doth touch, even then
She toucheth hartes, and raigneth in mens myndes:
Fyne Erato, whoſe looke a lyvely chere
Preſents in dancing, kepes a comely grace,
With ſemely geſture doth Polomyne ſtere,
Whoſe woordes whole routes of rankes do rule in place.
Urany her globes to view all bent,
The ninefold heaven obſerves with fixed face;
The blaſtes Eutrepe tunes of inſtrument,
With ſolace ſweet, hence my heavy dumpes to chaſe.
Lord Phæbus, in the myddes, (whoſe heavenly ſprite
Theſe ladyes doth inſpire) embraceth all
The graces in the muſes weed delyte,
To lead them fourth, that men in maze they fall.

Muſonius the philoſophers ſaying.

In woorking well, if travel you ſuſtaine,
Into the winde ſhall lightly paſſe the payne;

But of the dede the glory ſhall remayne,
And cauſe your name with worthy wights to raigne.
In working wrong, if pleaſure you attaine,
The pleaſure ſoon ſhall vade, and void as vaine.
But of the dede throughout the lyfe the ſhame
Endures, defacing you with foul deſame,
And ſtill torments the minde both night and day;
Scant length of time the ſpot can waſhe away.
Flee then ill ſuading pleaſures, baites untrue,
And noble vertues fayre renowne purſue.

Deſcription of virtue.

WHAT one art thou, thus in torn wedey clad?
Vertue in price, whom auncient ſages had.
Why poorely rayde? for fading goodes peaſt care.
Why double faced? I marke eche fortunes fare.
This bridle what? Myndes rages to reſtraine.
Fooles why beare you? I love to take great payne.
Why winges? I teach above the ſtarres to flye.
Why treade you death? I onely cannot dye.

Praiſe of meaſure-keeping.

THE ancient time commended not for nought;
The meane what better thinge there be ſought.
In meane is virtue placed on eyther ſide,
Both right and left amiſſe a man ſhall flyde.
Icar, with fire hadſt thou the midway flowne,
Icarian beck by name had no man knowne.
If myddle path kept had proud Phæton
No burning brand this earth had faine upon:
Ne cruel power, ne none ſo ſoft can raigne,
That kepes a meane, the fame ſhall ſtill remayne.
The Julie once dyed, to much mercy ſpill;
The Nero ſtern, rigor extreme dyd kill.
How could Auguſt ſo many yeres well paſſe,
Nor over meke nor over fierce he was:
Worſhip not Jove with curious fancies vaine,
Nor him deſpiſe; hold right atwene theſe twaine:
No waſtfull wight, no gredy gutt is prazed,
Stand largeſſe juſt in egall ballance payde:
So Catoes meal ſurmountes Antonius chere,
And better fame his ſober fare hath here
To ſlender building bad as bad to groſſe?
One an eye ſore, the tother falles to loſſe.
As medicines helpe in meaſure, ſo (God wot)
By overmuch the ſicke their bane have got.
Unmete me ſemes to utter this mo waies;
Meaſure forbiddes unmeaſurable praiſe.

Man's life, after Poſſidonius or Crates.

WHAT pathe liſt you to treade? what trade will you aſſay?
The courts of plea by braule and bate drive gecie peace away.
In houſe for wife and childe there is but carke and care,
With travel and with toyle enough in fields we uſe to fare.
Upon the ſeas lyeth dread; the riche in foreign lande,
Do feare the loſſe, and there the poore like myſers poorely ſtand.
Stryſe with a wife, without your thriftfull harde to ſee:
Yong brats a troble, none at all a mayme it ſemes to be.
Youth fonde, age hath no hart, and pincheth all to nye;
Chooſe then the leiſer of theſe two, ay life, or ſoon to dye.

Metrodorius's mynde to the contrary.

WHAT race of lyfe ronne you? what trade will you aſſay?
In courts is glory got, and witt increaſed day by day.
At home wee take our eaſe, and beake our ſelves in reſt:
The fieldes our nature do refreſhe with pleaſures of the beſt.
On ſeas is gain to geat; the ſtranger he ſhall be
Eſteem'd, having much, if not, none knoweth his lack but he.
A wyſe will trimme thy houſe, no wyle then art thou free;
Brood is a lovely thing, without thy lyfe is looſe to thee.
Yong bloodes be ſtronge, olde ſyres in double honour dwell,
Doway that choyſe, no lyfe or ſoon to dye, for all is well.

Of friendſhip.

OF all the heavenly gifts that mortal men commend,
What truſty treaſure in the world can countervaile a friende.
Our health is ſoon decaied; goodes caſual, light, and vaine;
Broke have we ſeen the force of power and honour ſuffer ſtaine.
In bodies luſt man doth reſemble but baſe brute,
True vertue geates and keeps a freinde: good guyde of our purſute, [caſe:
Whoſe hearty zeale with ours accordes in every
No terme of time, no ſpace of place, no ſtorme can it deface.
When fickle fortune failes, this knot endureth ſtill.
The kin out of their kind may ſwerve, when frendes owe thee good will:
When ſweter ſolace ſhall befall, then one to finde,
Upon whoſe breſt thou mayſt repoſe the ſecrets of thy minde?

He waileth at thy wo; his tears with thine be ſhed;
With thee doth he joys, ſo leſe a lyſe is led.
Behold thy frende, and of thy ſelf the paterne ſee,
One ſoul a wonder ſhall it ſeeme in bodies twaine to be;
In abſence preſent rych in want, in ſickneſſe ſound,
Ye after death alive, maiſt thou by thy ſure frende be founde.
Eche houſe, eche towne, each realme by ſtedfaſt love doth ſtande;
Where foule debate bredes bitter bale in eche divided lande,
O friendſhip, flower of flowers! O lively ſprite of lyſe!
O ſacred bond of bliſsful peace, the ſtalworth ſtanche of ſtrife:
Scipio with Lelius didſt thou conjoyne in care;
At home in warres for weale and wo, with equal faith to fare.
Giſippus eke with Tyte, Damon with Pythias;
And with Menethus' ſonne Achill by the combyned was:
Eurialus and Niſus gave Virgil cauſe to ſing
Of Pylades do many rymes and of Oreſtes ring:
Downe Theſeus went to hell, Pirith his frende to finde;
O that the wyves in theſe our daies wer to their mates ſo kynd!
Cicero the frendly man, to Atticus, his frende,
Of friendſhip wrote, ſuch couples, lo! doth lot, but ſeldom lend,
Recount thy race now ronne, how few ſhalt thou there ſee, [mee:
Of whom to ſay this ſame is he that never ſailed
So rare a jewell then muſt nedes be holden dere,
And as thou wilt eſteem thy ſelfe, ſo take thy choſen fere;
The tyrant in diſpaire no lacke of gold bewayles,
But out, I am undone (ſaith he) for all my friendſhips failes;
Wherefore ſince nothing is more kyndly for our kynde,
Next wiſdome thus that teacheth us, love wee the frendly minde.

The death of Zoroas, an Egyptian aſtronomer, in the firſt fight that Alexander had with the Perſians

Now clattring armes, now raging broyles of warre,
Gan paſſe the noys of dredfull trumpetts clang,
Shrowded with ſhafts, the heaven with cloude of dartes,
Covered the ayre againſt full fatted bulles.
As forceth kyndled yre the lyons keene,
Whoſe greedy gutts the gnawing hunger prickes:
So Macedons againſt the Perſians fair,
Now corpſes hyde the purpurde ſoyle with blood;
Large ſlaughter on eche ſide, but Perſes more,
Moyſt fieldes he bled, theyr heartes and numbers bate,
Fainted while they gave backe, and fall to flighte:
The lifening Macedon by ſwordes, by gleaves,
By bandes and troupes of ſootemen, with his garde,
Speedes to dary, but hym his mereſt kyn,
Oxate preſerves with horſemen on a plumpe
Before his carr, that none his charge ſhould give:
Here grunts, here groans, eche where ſtrong youth is ſpent:
Shaking her bloudy hands, Bellone among
The Perſes ſoweth all kind of cruel death:
With throte ycut he roares, he lyeth along,
His entrailes with a launce through gyrded quyte,
Hym ſmytes the club, hym woundes farre ſtryking bowe,
And him the ſling, and him the ſhining ſword;
He dyeth, he is all dead, he pantes, he reſtes.
Right over ſtoode in ſnow white armor brave,
The Memphite Zoroas, a cunnyng clarke,
To whom the heaven lay open as his booke;
And in celeſtiall bodies he could tell
The moving meeting light aſpect eclips,
And influence, and conſtellations all;
What earthly chaunces would betyde, what yere
Of plenty ſtorde, what ſigne forewarned death,
How winter gendreth ſnow, what temperature
In the primetyde doth ſeaſon well the ſoyle,
Why ſummer burnes, why autumne hath ripe grapes,
Whither the circle quadrate may become,
Whether our tunes heaven's harmony can yelde,
Of four begyns among themſelves howe great
Proportion is; what ſway the erryng lightes
Doth ſend in courſe gayne that fyrſt movyng heaven;
What grees one from another diſtant be,
What ſtarr doth let the hurtfull fyre to rage,
Or him more mylde what oppoſition makes,
What fyre doth qualifye Mavorſe's fyre,
What houſe eche one doth ſeeke, what planett raignes
Within this heaven ſphere, or that ſmall thynges,
I ſpeake, whole heaven he cloſeth in his breſt.
This ſage then in the ſtarres hath ſpyed the fates
Threatned him death without delay, and ſith
He ſaw he could not fatall order chaunge,
Foreward he preſt in battayle, that he might
Mete with the rulers of the Macedons,
Of his right hand deſirous to be ſlain,
The bouldeſt bourne, and worthieſt in the ſcilde;
And as a wight, now wery of his lyfe,
And ſeking death in fyrſt front of his rage,
Comes deſperately to Alexander's face,
At him with dartes one after other throwes,
With reckleſſe words, and clamour him provokes,
And ſayth, Nectanak's baſtard ſhamefull ſtayne
Of mothers bed, why loſeſt thou thy ſtrokes,
Cowardes among, turne thee to me, in caſe
Manhood there be ſo much left in thy heart:
Come fight with me, that on my helmet weare
Apollo's laurell both for learninges laude,
And eke for martiall praiſe, that in my ſhielde
The ſeven-fold ſophie of Minerve contein,
A match more mete ſyr king then any here.
The noble prince amoved takes ruth upon
The wilfull wight, and with ſoft words ayen,
O monſtrous man (quoth he) what ſo thou art,
I pray thee live, ne do not with thy death
This lodge of lore, the muſe's manſion marre;

That treaſure houſe this hand ſhall never ſpoyle,
My ſword ſhall never bruiſe that ſkilfull brayne,
Long gather'd heapes of ſcience ſome to ſpill;
O how fayre fruites may you to mortall men
From wiſdom's garden give; how many may
By you the wiſer and the better prove:
What error, what mad moode, what frenzy thee,
Perſwades to be downe, ſent to kepe Averne,
Where no artes flouriſh, nor no knowledge vailes
For all theſe fawes. When thus the ſovereign ſaid,
Alighted Zoroas with ſword unſheathed,
The careleſs king there ſmoate above the greve,
At th' opening of his quiſhes wounded him,
So that the blood down trailed on the ground:
The Macedon perceiving hurt, gan gnaſhe,
But yet his mynde he bent in any wiſe,
Hym to forbeare, ſett ſpurrs unto his ſtede,
And turnde away, leſt anger of his ſmarte
Should cauſe revenger hand deale baleſull blowes.
But of the Macedonians chieftaines knights,
One Meleager could not bear this ſight,
But ran upon the ſaid Egyptian reuk,
And cutt him in both knees: He fell to ground,
Wherewith a whole rout came of ſouldiours ſterne.
And all in pieces hewed the ſely ſeg,
But happely the ſoule fled to the ſtarres,
Where, under him, he hath full ſight of all,
Whereat he gazed here with reaching looke:
The Perſians waild ſuch ſapience to forgoe,
The very ſone the Macedonians wiſht
He would have lived, King Alexander ſelfe
Demde him a man unmete to dye at all;
Who wonne like praiſe for conqueſt of his yre,
As for ſtoute men in fielde that day ſubdued,
Who princes taught how to diſcerne a man,
That in his head ſo rare a jewel beares,
But over all thoſe ſame Camenes, thoſe ſame,
Divine Camenes, whoſe honour be procurde,
As tender parent doth hys daughters weale,
Lamented, and for thankes all that they can,
Do cheriſh hym deceaſt, and ſett him free,
From dark oblivion of devouring death.

Marcus Tullius Cicero's death.

Therefore when reſtleſs rage of wynde and wave,
He ſaw by fates, alas, calde for, (quoth he)
Is hapleſs Cicero, ſayle on, ſhape courſe
To the next ſhore, and bring me to my death.
Perdy theſe thankes reſcued from evill ſword,
Wilt thou my country pay? I ſee myne end:
So powers divine ſo bid the gods above,
In citie ſaved that conſul Marcus ſhend,
Speaking no more, but drawing from diep hart
Great grones, even at the name of Rome rehearſt,
His eyes and cheekes with ſhowers of tears he waſht;
And (though a route in daily dangers worne)
With forced face the ſhipmen held their teares,
And ſtrivyng long, the ſeas rough flood to paſſe,
In angry windes and ſtormy ſhowers made way.
And at the laſt ſafe ancred in the rode,
Came heavy Cicero a land, with payne,
His faynted lymmes the aged fyre doth drawe,
And round about their maſter ſtood his band:
Nor greatly with their own hard hap diſmayde,
Nor plighted faith prove in ſharpe tyme to breake,
Some ſwordes, prepare ſome theyr dere Lord aſſiſt:
In littour laid, they lead him unkouth wayes.
If ſo deceave Antonius cruell gleaves,
They might, and threats of following routs eſcape:
Thus lo, that Tullie, went that Tullius,
Of royal robe and ſacred ſenate prince,
When he a farre the men approache eſpyeth;
And of his ſone the enſign doth acknow,
And with drawn ſword, Popilius threat'ning death,
Whoſe life and whole eſtate, in hazard once
He had preſerved, when Rome, as yett to free,
Heard him, and at his thundring voice amazed;
Herennius eke more tyger than the reſt,
Preſent enflam'd with fury, him purſues.
What might he do, ſhould he uſe in defence
Dyſarmed handes, or pardon aſk for Mede?
Should he with wordes to turne the wrath
Of th' armed knight, whoſe ſafeguard he had wrought:
No age forbids, and fixt within diepe breſt
His countrys love, and falling Romes ymage;
The charret turn, ſayth he, let loſe the raines,
Runne to the undeſerved death mee, lo,
Hath Phœbus foule, as meſſenger forewarnde,
And Jove deſires a new heavens man to make.
Brutus and Caſſius ſouls, live you in bliſs?
In caſe, yet all the fates gain ſtrive us not,
Neither ſhall wee, perchaunce, dye unrevenged.
Now have I lived, O Rome! ynough for me;
My paſſed life nought ſuffreth me to doubt:
Noylome oblivion of the loathſome death.
Slea me: Yett all the offspring to come ſhall know,
And this deceaſe ſhall bring eternal life;
Yea, and (unleſſe I fall, and all in vaine:
Rome, I ſometime thy augur choſen was)
Not evermore ſhall friendly fortune thee
Favour, Antonius, once the day ſhall come,
When her dear wights, by cruell ſpight thus ſlaine,
Victorious Rome ſhall at thy hands require:
Me likes ther while, go ſee the hoaped heaven.
Speche had he left, and therewith, he, good man,
His throat prepard, and held his head unmov'd.
His haſting to thoſe fates the very knightes
Be loth to ſee, and rage rebated, when
They his bare necke beheld, and his hoare heares;
Scant could they hold the teares that fourth gan burſt,
And almoſt fell from bloudy hands the ſwordes;
Only the ſterne Herennius, with grim looke,
Daſtards, why ſtand you ſtill? he ſayeth, and ſtraight
Swaps of the head with his preſumptious yron.
Ne with that ſlaughter yet he is not filde:
Foul ſhame on ſhame to heape, is his delight,
Wherefore the handes alſo doth he of ſmyte,

Which durſt Antonius life ſo lyſely paint.
Him yelding, ſtrained ghoſt, from welkin hye,
With lothy chefe lord Phœbus gan behold,
And in black cloud, they ſay, long hid his head.
The Latine muſes and the graces they wept,
And for his fall eternally ſhall pepe:
And lo, here piercing Pitho, (ſtrange to tell)
Who had to him ſuffiſde both ſenſe and wordes,
When ſo he ſpake, and dreſt with hectar foode
That flowing tong, when his wind pipe diſcloſd,
Fled with her fleeing frend, and (out alas)
Hath left ther earth, ne will no more returne;
Popilious flieth ther while, and leaving there
The ſenſeleſs ſtock, a griezely ſight doth bear,
Unto Antonius boord with miſchief ſed,

Of M. T. Cicero.

For Tullie late a tombe I gan prepare,
When Cynthie, thus, bad me my labour ſpare:
Such manner thinges become the dead, quoth he,
But Tully lives, and ſtill alyve ſhall be.

N. G.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

Dorset, earl of

THOMAS SACKVILLE,

LORD BUCKHURST.

Containing his

INDUCTION TO THE MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES. | COMPLAINT OF HENRY DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

To which is prefixed

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

In vain I think, right honourable lord,
By this rude rime to memorize thy name,
Whose learned muse hath writ her owne record
In golden verse, worthy immortal fame.
Thou much more fit, were leisure for the same,
Thy gracious soveraigne's prayers to compile,
And her imperiall majestie to frame
In loftie numbers, and heroick stile.

SPENSER'S SONNET TO LORD BUCKHURST.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY *MUNDELL AND SON*, ROYAL BANK CLOSE;

Anno 1793.

400

THE LIFE OF SACKVILLE.

In the turbulent and ſanguinary reign of Queen Mary, when the fires of perſecution were kindled in Smithfield, and every part of England was polluted with murders, more atrocious than the ſlaughters of the moſt bloody civil war; the cultivation of polite literature was neglected amidſt the calamities of the ſtate, and only one poetical production, of prominent excellence, intituled, *A Mirror for Magiſtrates*, illuminates that interval of darkneſs between Surrey and Spenſer.

More writers than one were concerned in the compoſition of that popular poem, which originated in the reign of Mary, and was not finally completed till the beginning of the ſeventeenth century; but its inventor, and moſt diſtinguiſhed contributor was Thomas Sackville, the firſt Lord Buckhurſt, and Earl of Dorſet, Lord High Treaſurer of England, Chancellor of the Univerſity of Oxford, author of the firſt genuine Engliſh tragedy, and "the Patriarch of a race of genius and wit."

This diſtinguiſhed ſtateſman and poet, was the ſon of Richard Sackville, Eſq. of Buckhurſt, in the pariſh of Withiam, in Suſſex, where he was born in the year 1527. His mother was a daughter of Sir John Bruges, Lord Mayor of London, and afterwards wife of John Powlet, Marquis of Wincheſter.

He diſcovered, from his childhood, a lively wit and vigorous underſtanding, and was removed from a domeſtic tuition, to Hart-hall in Oxford, where he reſided ſome time; but took no degree. He afterwards removed to Cambridge, where he did not reſide long; but had the degree of Maſter of Arts conferred on him.

At both univerſities he became celebrated as a Latin and Engliſh poet. Wood mentions him as "having been in his younger years poetically inclined; and wrote, while he continued in Oxon, ſeveral Latin and Engliſh poems: though publiſhed, either by themſelves, or mixed among other men's poems, yet I preſume they are loſt or forgotten, as having no name to them, or that the copies are worn out."

He afterwards entered himſelf a ſtudent in the Inner Temple, and at an early period of life was called to the bar.

He carried his love of poetry, which he ſeems to have almoſt ſolely cultivated, to the Inner Temple, where, in conjunction with Thomas Norton, a fellow-labourer of Hopkins and Sternhold, he wrote a tragedy, intituled, *Ferrex and Porrex*, which was acted before Queen Elizabeth, at Whitehall, by the ſtudents of the Inner Temple, in 1561. It was printed incorrectly and ſurreptitiouſly in 1565; more accurately in 1570; in 1590, by the title of *Gorboduc*; and reprinted by Dodſley in 1736, with a preface by Mr. Spence, by the procuration of Pope, "who wondered that the propriety and natural eaſe of it had not been better imitated by the dramatic authors of the ſucceeding age."

About the year 1557, he formed the plan of the *Mirror for Magiſtrates*, in which all the illuſtrious but unfortunate characters of the Engliſh hiſtory, from the Conqueſt to the end of the fourteenth century, were to paſs in review before the poet, who deſcends, like Dante, into hell, and is conducted by *Sorrow*. Every perſonage was to recite his own misfortunes in a ſoliloquy. But he had leiſure only to finiſh a poetical preface, called an *Induction*, and one legend, which is the *Life of Henry Stafford Duke of Buckingham*.

Relinquiſhing, therefore, the deſign abruptly, and haſtily adapting the cloſe of his *Induction* to the appearance of Buckingham, whoſe ſtory was to have been the laſt in his ſeries, he recommended the completion of the whole to Richard Baldwyne and George Ferrers, men of the greateſt wit in that age.

Deterred, perhaps, by the greatneſs of the attempt, they invited to their aſſiſtance Churchyard, Phayer, and other men of wit and genius, who choſe ſuch lives from the chronicles of Fabian and Hall, as ſeemed to diſplay the moſt affecting cataſtrophes, and which were probably pointed out by Sackville.

This collection was printed in 4to, 1559, with the following title, *A Myrroure for Magiſtrates, wherein may be ſeen, by example of others, with howe greveus plages vices are puniſhed, and how frail and unſtable worldly proſperitie is founde, even of thoſe whom fortune ſeemeth moſt highly to favour.* "*Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.*" *Anno* 1559, *Ædibus Thomæ Marſhe.*

As he early quitted the ſtudy of the law for the flowery paths of poetry; ſo the poet was ſoon loſt in the ſtateſman; and negociations and embaſſies extinguiſhed the milder ambitions of the ingenious muſe.

In the fourth and fifth years of Queen Mary, his name appears in the parliamentary liſts; and in the fifth of Queen Elizabeth, 1564, when his father was elected knight of the ſhire for Suſſex, he was returned one of the members for Buckinghamſhire.

Not long after this, he travelled into France and Italy, and was detained ſome time a priſoner at Rome, in conſequence of ſome pecuniary inconvenience.

On his father's death in 1566, his liberty was procured, and he returned to England, to take poſſeſſion of an ample patrimony.

His eminent accompliſhments and abilities having acquired the confidence and eſteem of Queen Elizabeth, he was knighted in 1567, in her preſence, by the Duke of Norfolk, and at the ſame time promoted to the peerage, by the title of *Baron Buckhurſt.*

In conſequence of the Queen's frequent admonitions, he is ſaid to have corrected his taſte for magnificence and expence, which had ſome times ſubjected him to conſiderable inconveniencies.

In 1573, he went ambaſſador to France. In 1574, he ſat on the trial of the Duke of Norfolk; at which time he was alſo in the Privy Council.

He was nominated one of the commiſſioners for the trial of Mary Queen of Scots; but it does not appear that he was preſent at her condemnation at Fotheringay Caſtle; yet after the confirmation of the ſentence, he was appointed to bear the unhappy tidings to her, and to ſee the ſentence put in execution.

In 1587, he went ambaſſador to the States-General; but, having incurred the diſpleaſure of the Earl of Leiceſter and Lord Burleigh, he was recalled, and confined to his houſe nine months.

On the death of Leiceſter, he recovered the Queen's favour, and was made Knight of the Garter, one of the peers who ſat on the trial of Lord Arundel, and joined with Burleigh, in negociating a peace with Spain and Holland.

In 1591, he was, by the Queen's recommendation, elected Chancellor of the Univerſity of Oxford, in oppoſition to Eſſex, the object of her capricious paſſion, and incorporated Maſter of Arts.

On Burleigh's death, he was appointed Lord High Treaſurer, and ſoon after joined in commiſſion with Eſſex and Sir Thomas Egerton for negociating an alliance with Denmark; and when that unfortunate nobleman was brought to his trial, with his friend Southampton, he was conſtituted Lord High Steward on the occaſion.

At the acceſſion of King James, his patent of Lord High Treaſurer was renewed for life; and in 1603, he was created *Earl of Dorſet*, and appointed one of the commiſſioners for executing the office of Lord Marſhal.

He died ſuddenly at the council-table, Whitehall, April 19th 1608, in the 81ſt year of his age, and was buried in Weſtminſter Abbey.

His funeral ſermon was preached by Dr. Abbot, his chaplain, afterwards Archbiſhop of Canterbury, in which he is very laviſh in his praiſe.

The character of Sackville, as a ſtateſman, is to be ſought elſewhere. It is ſufficient to ſay, that few firſt miniſters have left ſo fair a character. Amidſt the intrigues of an artful court, he preſer-

ed the integrity of a private man. His family diſdained the offer of an apology for him, againſt ſome little cavils of a rival party. In the exerciſe of his political functions, the brilliancy of his imagination grew more correct, not leſs abundant. Naunton relates, that his "ſecretaries had difficulty to pleaſe him, he was ſo *facete* and choice in his ſtyle." Even in the deciſions of that rigid tribunal, the Star Chamber, which was never eſteemed the ſchool of eloquence, "ſo ſtrong," ſays Lloyd, "was his invention, that he was called the *Star Chamber Bell.*" Amidſt the buſineſs of an envoy at Paris, he found time to prefix a *Latin Epiſtle* to Clerke's Latin tranſlation of Caſtiglio's "Courtier," which is not an unworthy recommendation of a treatiſe remarkable for its polite Latinity. Himſelf a poet, he encouraged the art which he improved, by his liberality; and left his wit and patronage of polite literature to his deſcendants, of whom was Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorſet, the well known patron of Dryden and Prior;

——— Whoſe great forefathers every grace,
Reflecting and reflected in his race;
Where other *Buckhurſts*, other *Dorſets* ſhine,
And poets ſtill, or patriots deck the line.

He was more courted and complimented by poets than any nobleman of his time, except Eſſex, whoſe love of literature, heroiſm, integrity, and generoſity, made him the favourite of the nation, and the ſubject of innumerable ſonnets and ballads, from Spenſer to the loweſt rhymer: And if panegyric were any where juſtifiable, it muſt be when paid to the man, who endeavoured to ſave Spenſer from ſtarving in the ſtreets of Dublin, and who buried him in Weſtminſter Abbey, with becoming ſolemnity.

As a poet, Sackville has pretenſions to the gratitude of poſterity, which have not hitherto been fully conſidered or allowed. He is entitled to rank with Spenſer, Shakſpeare, and Marlowe, the moſt eminent poets of his age; by the firſt of whom he is only ſurpaſſed in the perfection of allegory, by having had the diſadvantage of writing before him; and, by the ſecond, in his magic power of moving the paſſions, and the unrivalled excellence of his dramatic dialogue.

His tragedy of *Gorboduc* has the merit of being the firſt ſpecimen in our language of a heroic tale written in blank verſe, divided into acts and ſcenes, and clothed in all the formalities of a regular drama. It is praiſed by Sidney for its *notable moralitie*; but it was never popular, owing to the unintereſting nature of the plot, the tedious length of the ſpeeches, the want of a diſcrimination of character, and almoſt a total abſence of pathetic incidents. The dialogue, however, contains much dignity, ſtrength of reflection, and good ſenſe; and the language has great purity and perſpicuity, and is entirely free from that tumid phraſeology, and thoſe exaggerated imageries and pedantic metaphors, which are the chief blemiſhes of the ſcenes of Shakſpeare.

The aſſiſtance of Norton, to whom the three firſt acts are given by Wood, may be juſtly doubted. Every ſcene of *Gorboduc* is marked by Sackville's characteriſtic manner, which conſiſts in a perſpicuity of ſtyle, and a command of numbers, ſuperior to the tone of his age.

In the *Mirror for Magiſtrates* he has two poems of conſiderable length, the *Induction*, and *Legend of Buckingham*, which are the chief foundation of his fame.

The collection, of which they make a conſpicuous part, was reprinted in 1563, 1571, 1574, and in 1587, with an Induction, and the additions of many new lives, by John Higgins. At length the whole was digeſted anew, with additions by Richard Niccols, an ingenious poet, and printed in 1610, under the following title: *A Mirrour for Magiſtrates, being a true chronicle hiſtoric of the untimely falles of ſuch unfortunate princes, and men of note, as have happened ſince the firſt entrance of Brute into this iſland, until this our age, newly enlarged, with a laſt part, called, A Winter's Night Viſion, being an addition of ſuch tragedies, eſpecially famous, as are exempted in the former hiſtorie, with a poem annexed, called, England's Eliza.* At London, imprinted by Felix Kyngſton, 1610.

Sackville's ſhare in it is illuſtrated in the preface. "I purpoſe only to follow the intended ſcope of that moſt honorable patronage, who, by how much he did ſurpaſſe the reſt in the eminence of his noble condition, by ſo much he hath exceeded them all in the excellence of his heroical ſtile,

which, with golden pen, he hath limmed out to posteritie in that worthy object of his minde, THE TRAGEDIE OF THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM, and in his preface, then intituled MASTER SACKVIL'S INDUCTION." This edition, which contains 86 lives and 875 pages, has never been reprinted, and is extremely scarce. That it was in high esteem throughout the reign of Queen Elizabeth, appears not only from its numerous editions, but from the testimonies of Sidney, Heywod, Webbe, Bolton, and other contemporary writers. It is reasonable to suppose, that it enriched the stores, and extended the limits of our drama. Shakspeare is indebted to it for many scenes in his plays. Much of it might bear republication, and make good its claim to public notice; particularly the legends written by Churchyard and Niccols, which have considerable merit, and often shew a command of language and versification. But the *Induction* and *Legend* of Sackville, afford the most favourable specimen of those popular legends, and deserve being revived equally as compositions of real and intrinsic merit, and as objects of curiosity. They are now received, for the first time, into a collection of classical English poetry.

The Earl of Orford and Mr. Warton have characterised the poetry of Sackville with such elegance and minuteness, that it will be sufficient to add their testimonies as a justification of the revival of his writings, and as unquestionable authorities in his favour.

"Our historic plays," says Lord Orford, "are allowed to have been founded on the heroic narratives in the Mirror for Magistrates; to that plan, and to the boldness of Lord Buckhurst's new scenes, perhaps we owe Shakspeare."

"Sackville's *Induction*," says Mr. Warton," loses much of its dignity and propriety, by being prefixed to a single life, and that of no great historical importance; the plan is confessedly copied from Boccaces' *De Casibis virorum illustrium*, translated by Lydgate; the descent into hell, from Dante's "Commedia," and the sixth book of Virgil. The shadowy inhabitants of hell-gate are his own, and conceived with the vigour of a creative imagination, and described with great force of expression; they are delineated with that fullness of proportion, that invention of picturesque attributes, distinctness, animation, and amplitude, of which Spenser is commonly supposed to have given the first specimens in our language, and which are characteristical of his poetry. The readers of the "Faery Queene" will easily point out many particular passages, which Sackville's *Induction* suggested to Spenser."

"The *Complaynt of Henrye Duke of Buckingham*, is written with a force and even elegance of expression, a copiousness of phraseology, and an exactness of versification, not to be found in any other parts of the collection. On the whole, it may be thought tedious and languid; but that objection unavoidably results from the general plan of these pieces. It is impossible that soliloquies of such prolixity, and designed to include much historical, and even biographical matter, should every where sustain a proper degree of spirit, pathos, and interest."

THE INDUCTION

TO A

MIRROUR FOR MAGISTRATES.

The wrathfull winter prochinge on a pace,
With bluſtring blaſtes had al ybared the treen,
And olde Saturnus with his froſty face
With chilling colde had pearſt the tender green:
The mantels rent, wherein enwrapped been
The gladſom groves that nowe laye overthrowen,
The tapets torne, and every blome downe blowen.

The ſoyle that erſt ſo ſeemly was to ſeen,
Was all deſpoyled of her beauties hewe:
And ſoot freſhe flowers (where with the ſommers queen [blewe
Had clad the earth) now Boreas blaſtes downe
And ſmall fowles flocking, in their ſong did rewe
The winters wrath, wher with eche thing defaſte
In woful wiſe bewayled the ſommer paſt.

Hawthorne had loſt his motley lyverye,
The naked twigges were ſhivering all for colde:
And dropping downe the teares abundantly,
Eche thing (me thought) with weping eye me tolde
The cruell ſeaſon, bidding me withholde
My ſelfe within, for I was gotten out
Into the feldes whereas I walkte about.

When loe the night with miſtie mantels ſpred,
Can darke the daye, and dim the azure ſkyes,
And Venus in her meſſage Hermes ſped
To bluddy Mars, to wyl him not to ryſe,
While ſhe her ſelfe approcht in ſpeedy wiſe:
And Virgo hiding her diſdainful breſt
With Thetis now had layd her downe to reſt.

Whiles Scorpio dreading Sagittarius dart,
Whoſe bowe preſt bent in ſight, the ſtring had ſlypt,
Downe ſlyd into the ocean flud aparte,
The Beare that in the Iryſhe ſeas had dipt
His grieſly feete, with ſpeede from thence he whypt:
For Thetis haſting from the Virgines bed
Purſued the Bear, that ear ſhe came was fled.

And Phaeton nowe neare reaching to his race
With gliſtering beames, gold ſtreamynge where they bent
Was preſt to enter in his reſting place.
Crythius that in the carte fyrſte went
Had even now attaynde his journeys ſtent
And faſt declining hid away his head,
While Titan couched him in his purple bed.

And pale Cinthea with her borowed light
Beginning to ſupply her brothers place,
Was paſt the noonſteede fyre degrees in ſight,
When ſparkling ſtarres amyd the heavens face
With twinkling light ſheen on the earth apace,
That whyle they brought about the nightes chare
The darke had dimmed the day ear I was ware.

And ſorowing I to ſee the ſommer flowers
The livly greene, the luſty leas forlorne,
The ſturdy trees ſo ſhattered with the ſhowers,
The fields ſo fade that flooriſht ſo beforne
It taught me wel all earthly things be borne
To dye the death, for nought long time may laſt;
The ſommers beauty yeeldes to winters blaſt.

Then looking upward to the heavens leames
With nightes ſtarres thicke powdred every where,
Which erſt ſo gliſtened with the golden ſtreames
That chearefull Phebus ſpred downe from his ſphere,
Beholding darke oppreſſing day ſo neare:
The ſodayne ſight reduced to my minde
The ſundry chaunges that in earth wo fynde.

That muſing on this worldly wealth in thought,
Which comes and goes more faſter than we ſee
The flyckering flame that with the fyer is wrought,
My buſie minde preſented unto me
Such fall of pieres as in this realme had be:
That ofte I wiſht ſome would their woes deſcryve.
To warne the reſt whom fortune left alive

And ſtrayt forth ſtalking with redoubled pace
For that I ſawe the night drewe on ſo faſt,
In blacke all clad there fell before my face
A piteous wight, whom woe had al forwaſte,
Furth from her iyen the criſtall teares outbraſt,
And ſyghing ſore her handes ſhe wrong and folde,
Tare al her heare, that ruth was to beholde.

Her body ſmall forwithered and forſpent,
As is the ſtalk that ſommers drought oppreſt;
Her wealked face with woful teares beſprent,
Her colour pale, and (as it ſeemd her beſt)
In woe and playnt repoſed was her reſt.
And as the ſtone that droppes of water weares;
So dented wer cher cheekes with fall of teares.

Her iyes ſwollen with flowing ſtreames aflote,
Wherewith her lookes throwen up full piteouſlie,
Her forceles handes together ofte ſhe ſmote,
With doleful ſhrikes, that echoed in the ſkye:
Whoſe playnt ſuch ſighes dyd ſtrayt accompany,
That in my doome was never man did ſee
A wight but halfe ſo woe begon as ſhe.

I ſtoode agaſt beholding all her plight,
Tweene dread and dolour ſo diſtreynd in hart,
That while my heares upſtarted with the ſight,
The teares out ſtreamde for ſorowe of her ſmart:
But when I ſawe no ende that could aparte
The deadly dewle, which ſhe ſo ſore dyd make,
With doleſull voice then thus to her I ſpake.

Unwrap thy woes what ever wight thou be,
And ſtint betime to ſpill thy ſelfe wyth playnt;
Tell what thou art, and whence, for well I ſee
Thou canſt not dure with ſorowe thus attaynt.
And with that worde of ſorrowe all forſaynt
She looked up, and proſtrate as ſhe laye
With piteous ſound loe thus ſhe gan to ſaye.

Alas! I wretche whom thus thou ſeeſt diſtreyned
With waſting woes that never ſhall aſlake,
Sorrowe I am, in endeles tormentes payned,
Among the furies in the infernall lake:
Where Pluto god of hel ſo grieſly blacke
Doth hold his throne, and *Lethens* deadly taſte
Doth rieve remembraunce of eche thyng forepaſt.

Whence come I am, the drery deſtinie
And luckeles lot for to bemone of thoſe,
Whom fortune in this maze of miſerie
Of wretched chaunce moſt wofull myrrours choſe
That when thou ſeeſt how lightly they did loſe
Theyr pope, theyr power, and that they thought moſt ſure
Thou mayeſt ſoone deeme no earthly joy may dure

Whoſe rufull voyce no ſooner had out brayed
Thoſe woful woordes, wherewith ſhe ſorrowed ſo,
But out alas! ſhe ſhryght and never ſtayed,
Fell downe, and all to daſht her ſelfe for woe.
The cold pale dread my lymes gan overgo
And I ſo ſorrowed at her ſorowes eft, [reft.
That what with griefe and feare my wittes were

I ſtrecht my ſelfe, and ſtrayt my heart revives,
That dread and dolour erſt did ſo appale;
Lyke him that with the fervent fever ſtryves
When ſickneſs ſeekes his caſtell health to ſkale:
With gathered ſpirites ſo forſt I feare to availe:
And rearing her with anguiſhe all fordone,
My ſpirits return'd, and then I thus begonne.

O Sorrowe, alas! ſith ſorrowe is thy name,
And that to thee this drere doth well pertayne,
In vayne it were to ſeeke to ceas the ſame:
But as a man hym ſelfe with ſorrowe ſlayne,
So I, alas! do comfort thee in payne,
That here in ſorrowe art forſonke ſo depe
That at thy ſight I can but ſigh and wepe.

I had no ſooner ſpoken of a ſtike,
But that the ſtorm ſo rumbled in her breſt,
As Eolus could never roare the like,
And ſhowers downe rayned from her iyen ſo faſt,
That all bedreynt the place, till at the laſt
Well eaſed they the dolour of her minde,
As rage of rayne doth ſwage the ſtormy wynde.

For furth ſhe placed in her fearfull tale:
Cum, cum, (quod ſhe) and ſee what I ſhall ſhewe,
Cum heare the playning, and the bytter bale
Of worthy men, by fortune overthrowe.
Cum thou and ſee them rewing all in rowe.
They were but ſhades that erſt in minde thou rolde.
Cum, cum with me, thine eyes ſhall them beholde.

What could theſe wordes but make me more agaſt:
To heare her tell whereon I muſde while eare:
So was I mazed therewyth, tyll at the laſt,
Muſing upon her wurdes, and what they were,
All ſodaynly well leſſoned was my feare:
For to my minde returned howe ſhe telde
Both what ſhe was, and where her wun ſhe helde.

Whereby I knewe that ſhe a goddeſſe was,
And therewithall reſorted to my minde
My thought that late preſented me the glas
Of brittle ſtate, of cares that here we finde,
Of thouſand woes to ſilly men aſſynde:
And howe ſhe nowe byd me come and beholde,
To ſee with iye that erſt in thought I rolde.

That downe I fell, and with al reverence
Adored her, perceyving nowe that ſhe
A goddeſſe ſent by godly providence,
In earthly ſhape thus ſhowed herſelf to me,
To wayle and rue this worldes uncertayntye:
And while I honoured thus her godheds might,
With playning voyce theſe wurdes to me ſhe ſhryght:

I ſhall the guyde firſt to the grieſly lake,
And thence unto the bliſsful place of reſt,
Where thou ſhalt ſee and heare the playnt they make,
That whilom here bare ſwinge among the beſt.
This ſhalt thou ſee, but great is the unreſt
That thou muſt byde before thou canſt attayne
Unto the dreadſull place where theſe remayne.

And with theſe wurdes as I uprayſed ſtood,
And gan to folowe her that ſtrayght furth paced,
Eare I was ware, into a deſert wood
We nowe were cum: where hand in hand imbraced,
She led the way, and through the thicke ſo traced
As but I had beene guided by her might,
It was no way for any mortall wight.

But loe, while thus amid the deſert darke,
We paſſed on with ſteppes and pace unmette:
A rumbling roar confuſde with howle and bark
Of dogs, ſhoke all the ground under our feete,
And ſtroke the din within our eares ſo deepe
As halfe diſtraught unto the ground I fell,
Beſought retourne, and not to viſite hell.

But ſhe forthwith uplifting me apace
Removed my dread, and with a ſtedfaſt minde
Bad me come on, for here was now the place,
The place where we our travayle ende ſhould finde.
Wherewith I aroſe, and to the place aſſynde
Aſtoynde I ſtalke, when ſtrayt we approched nere
The dredfull place, that you wil dread to here.

An hydeous hole al vaſte, withouten ſhape,
Of endleſs depth, orewhelmde with ragged ſtone,
Wyth ougly mouth, and griſly jawes doth gape,
And to our ſight confounds it ſelfe in one.
Here entred we, and yeding forth, anone
An horrible lothly lake we might diſcerne
As blacke as pitche, that cleped is Averne.

A deadly gulfe where nought but rubbiſhe grows,
With fowle blacke ſwelth in thickned lumpes lyes,
Which up in the ayer ſuch ſtinking vapors throwes
That over there, may flye no fowle but dyes,
Choakt with the peſtilent ſavours that aryſe.
Hither we cum, whence forth we ſtill dyd pace,
In dreadful feare amid the dreadfull place.

And firſt within the porteche and jawes of hell
Sate diepe Remorſe of Conſcience, al beſprent
With teares: and to her ſelfe oft would ſhe tell
Her wretchednes, and curſing never ſtent
To ſob and ſigh: but ever thus lament,
With thoughtful care, as ſhe that all in vayne
Would weare and waſte continually in payne.

Her iyes unſtedfaſt rolling here and there,
Whurld on eche place, as place that vengeauns brought,
So was her minde continually in feare,
Toſſed and tormented with the tedious thought
Of thoſe deteſted crymes which ſhe had wrought:
With dreadful cheare and lookes thrown to the ſkye,
Wyſhyng for death, and yet ſhe could not dye.

Next ſawe we Dread al tremblyng how he ſhooke,
With foot uncertayne proferd here and there:
Benumde of ſpeache, and with a gaſtly looke
Searcht every place al pale and dead for feare,
His cap borne up with ſtarting of his heare,

Stoynde and amazde at his owne ſhade for deed,
And fearing greater daungers than was nede.

And next within the entry of this lake
Sate fell Revenge gnaſhing her teeth for yre,
Deviſing means howe ſhe may vengeaunce take,
Never to reſt tyll ſhe have her deſire:
But frets within ſo far forth with the fyer
Of wreaking flames, that now determines ſhe,
To dye by death, or vengde by death to be.

When fell Revenge with bloudy foule pretence
Had ſhowed her ſelfe as next in order ſet,
With trembling limmes we ſoftly parted thence,
Tyll in our iyes another fight we met:
When fro my hart a ſigh forthwith I fet,
Rewing alas upon the wofull plight
Of Miſerie, that next appeared in ſight.

His face was leane, and ſumdeale pyned away,
And eke his handes conſumed to the bone,
But what his body was I can not ſay,
For on his carkas rayment had he none,
Save cloutes and patches pieced one by one.
With ſtaffe in hande, and ſkrip on ſhoulders caſt,
His chiefe defence agaynſt the winters blaſt.

His foode for moſt, was wylde fruytes of the tree,
Unles ſumtimes ſum crummes fell to his ſhare:
Which in his wallet long, Ged wote, kept he,
As on the which full daynttye would he fare.
His drinke the running ſtreame: his cup the bare
Of his palme cloſed: his bed the hard colde grounde.
To this poore life was Miſerie ybound.

Whoſe wretched ſtate when we had well beheld
With tender ruth on him and on his feres,
In thoughtful cares, furth then our pace we helde;
And by and by, an other ſhape apperes,
Of greedy Care, ſtil bruſhing up the breres,
His knuckles knob'd, his fleſhe depe dented in,
With tawed handes, and hard ytanned ſkyn.

The morrowe graye no ſooner had begunne
To ſpreade his light even peping in our iyes,
When he is up and to his worke yrunne:
But let the nightes blacke miſtye mantels riſe.
And with fowle darke never ſo much diſguyſe
The fayre bright day, yet ceaſſeth he no whyle,
But hath his candels to prolong his toyle.

By him lay heavy Slepe the coſin of death
Flat on the ground, and ſtill as any ſtone,
A very corps, ſave yelding forth a breath.
Small kepe took he whom Fortune frowned on,
Or whom ſhe lifted up into the trone
Of high renowne, but as a living death,
So dead alyve, of lyef he drewe the breath.

The bodyes reſt, the quyete of the hart,
The travayles eaſe, the ſtill nightes ſeer was he.
And of our life in earth the better parte,
Reuen of fight, and yet in whom we ſee
Thinges of that tide, and oſte that never bee.

Without reſpect eſteeming equally
Kyng Creſus pompe, and Irus povertie.

And next in order ſad Old Age we found
His beard all hoare, his iyes hollow and blynde,
With drouping chere ſtill poring on the ground,
As on the place where nature him affinde
To reſt, when that the ſiſters had untwynde
His vitall threde, and ended with theyr knyfe
The fleeting courſe of faſt declining life.

There heard we him with broken and hollow playn,
Rewe with him ſelfe his ende approaching faſt,
And all for nought his wretched minde torment
With ſwete remembraunce of his pleaſures paſt,
And freſhe delites of luſty youth forwaſte.
Recounting which, how would he ſob and ſhrike:
And to be yong againe of Jove beſeke.

But and the cruell fates ſo fixed be
That time forpaſt can not retourne agayne,
This one requeſt of Jove yet prayed he:
That in ſuch withered plight, and wretched paine,
As elde (accompanied with his lothſom trayne)
Had brought on him, all were it woe and griefe.
He might a while yet linger forth his lief;

And not ſo ſoone deſcend into the pit,
Where death, when he the mortall corps hath ſlayne,
With retchles hande in grave doth cover it,
Thereafter never to enjoye agayne
The gladſome light, but in the ground ylayne
In depth of darknes waſte and weare to nought,
As he had never into the world been brought.

But who had ſeene him ſobbing, howe he ſtoode
Unto himſelfe, and howe he would bemone
His youth forepaſt, as though it wrought hym good
To talke of youth, al wer his youth foregone,
He would have muſed, and mervayled muche whereon
This wretched age ſhould life deſyre ſo fayne,
And knowes ful wel life doth but length his payne.

Crookebackt he was, tooth ſhaken, and blere iyed,
Went on three feete, and ſometime crept on fower,
With olde lame bones, that ratled by his ſyde,
His ſkalpe all pilde, and he with elde forlore:
His withered fiſt ſtil knocking at deathes dore,
Tumbling and driveling as he drawes his breth;
For briefe, the ſhape and meſſenger of death.

And faſt by him pale Maladie was plaſte,
Sore ſicke in bed, her colour all forgone,
Bereft of ſtomake, ſavor, and of taſte,
Ne could ſhe brooke no meat but brothes alone.
Her breath corrupt, her keepers every one
Abhorring her, her ſicknes paſt recure,
Deteſting phiſicke, and all phiſickes cure.

But oh the doleful ſight that then we ſee.
We turnde our looke, and on the other ſide
A grieſly ſhape of Famine mought we ſee,
With greedy lookes, and gaping mouth that cryed,
And roard for meat as ſhe ſhould there have dyed,
Her body thin and bare as any bone,
Whar to was left nought but the caſe alone;

And that alas was knawen on every where
All full of holes, that I ne mought refrayne
From teares, to ſee how ſhe her armes could teare,
And with her teeth gnaſh on the bones in vayne:
When all for nought ſhe fayne would ſo ſuſtayne
Her ſtarven corps, that rather ſeemde a ſhade,
Then any ſubſtaunce of a creature made.

Great was her force whom ſtonewall could not ſtay,
Her tearyng nayles ſcratching at all ſhe ſawe:
With gaping jawes that by no means ymay
Be ſatisfyed from hunger of her mawe,
But eates her ſelfe as ſhe that hath no lawe:
Gnawing alas her carkas all in vayne, [vayne.
Where you may count eche ſinow, bone, and

On her while we thus firmly fixt our iyes,
That bled for ruth of ſuch a drery ſight,
Loe ſodaynelye ſhe ſhryght in ſo huge wyſe,
As made hell gates to ſhyver with the myght.
Wherewith a dart we ſawe howe it did lyght
Ryght on her breaſt, and therewithal pale death.
Enthryiling it to rave her of her breath.

And by and by a dum dead corps we ſawe,
Heavy and colde, the ſhape of death aryght,
That dauntes all earthly creatures to his lawe:
Againſt whoſe force in vayne it is to fyght
Ne pieres, ne princes, nor no mortall wyght,
No townes, ne realmes, cities, ne ſtrongeſt tower,
But al perforce muſt yeeld unto his power.

His dart anon out of the corps he tooke,
And in his hand (a dreadful ſight to ſee)
With great triumphe eftſones the ſame he ſhooke,
That moſt of all my feares affrayed me:
His bodie dight with nought but bones perdye,
The naked ſhape of man there ſawe I playne,
All ſave the fleſhe, the ſynowe, and the vayne.

Laſtly ſtoode Warre in glitteryng armes yclad.
With viſage grym, ſterne lookes, and blackely hewed:
In his right hand a naked ſworde he had,
That to the hiltes was al with bloud embrewed:
And in his left (that kinges and kingdomes rewed)
Famine and fyer he held, and therewythall
He razed townes, and threwe downe towers and all.

Cities he ſakt, and realmes that whilom flowered,
In honour, glory, and rule above the beſt,
He overwhelmde, and all theyr fame devowred,
Conſumed, deſtroyed, waſted, and never ceaſt,
Tyll he theyr wealth, their name, and all oppreſt.
His face forchewed with woundes, and by his ſide
There hunge his terge with gaſhes depe and wyde.

In mids of which, depaynted there we founde
Deadly Debate, al ful of snaky heare,
That with a bloudy fillet was ybound,
Out breathing nought but discord every where.
And round about were portrayed here and there
The hugie hostes, Darius and his power,
His kynges, prynces, his pieres, and all his flower;

Whom great Macedo vanquisht there in fight,
With diepe slaughter, dispoyling all his pryde,
Pearst through his realmes, and daunted all his might.
Duke Hanniball beheld I there beside,
In Cannas field, victor howe he did ride,
And woful Romaynes that in vayne withstoode,
And Consul Paulus covered all in bloode.

Yet sawe I more, the fight at Trasimene,
And Trebery fyeld, and eke when Hannibal
And worthy Scipio last in armes were seene
Before Carthago gate, to trye for all
The worldes empyre, to whom it should befal.
There sawe I Pompeye, and Cesar clad in armes,
Theyr hostes alyed, and al theyr civil harmes.

With conquerours hands forbathde in their owne blood,
And Cesar weeping over Pompeyes head.
Yet sawe I Scilla and Darius where they stoode,
Theyr great crueltie, and the diepe bludshed
Of frendes: Cyrus I sawe and his host dead,
And howe the queene with great despyte hath slonge
His head in bloud of them she overcome.

Xerxes the Percian kyng yet sawe I there,
With his huge host that dranke the rivers drye,
Dismounted hilles, and made the vales uprere,
His hoste and all yet sawe I slayne perdye.
Thebes I sawe all razde howe it dyd lye
In heapes of stones, and Tyrus put to spoyle, [soyle.
With walles and towers flat evened with the

But Troy, alas! (me thought) above them all,
It made mine iyes in very teares consume,
When I beheld the wofull werd befall,
That by the wrathful wyl of Gods was come:
And Jove's unmooved sentence and foredome
On Priam kyng, and on his towne so bent.
I could not lyn, but I must there lament.

And that the more sith Destinie was so sterne
As force perforce, there might no force avayle,
But she must fall: and by her fall we learne,
That cities, towres, wealth, world, and al shall quayle. [vayle,
No manhoode, might, nor nothing mought pre-
Al wer there prest, ful many a prynce and piere,
And many a knight that sold his death-full deere.

Not wurthy Hector wurthyest of them all,
Her hope, her joye; his force is now for nought.
O Troy, Troy, there is no boote but bale;
The hugie horse within thy walles is brought:
Thy turrets fall, thy knightes that whilom fought
In armes amyd the fyeld, are slayne in bed.
Thy Gods defylde, and all thy honour dead.

The flames upspring, and cruelly they crepe
From wall to roofe, til all to cindres waste;
Some fyer the houses where the wretches slepe,
Sum rushe in here, some run in there as fast.
In every where or sword or fyer they taste.
The walles are torne, the towers whurld to the ground;
There is no mischiefe but may there be found.

Cassandra yet there sawe I howe they haled
From Pallas' house, with spercled tresse undone,
Her wristes fast bound, and with Greeks rout empaled:
And Priam eke in vayne howe he did runne
To armes, when Pyrrhus with despite hath done
To cruel death, and bathed him in the bayne
Of his sonnes blud before the altare slayne.

But howe can I descryve the doleful sight,
That in the shylde so livlike layer did shyne!
Sith in this world I think was never wyght
Could have set furth the halfe, nor halfe so fyne.
I can no more but tell howe there is scene
Fayer Ilium fall in burning red gledes downe,
And from the soyle great Troy Neptunus towne. [drawe,
Herefrom when scarce I could mine iyes with-
That fylde with teares as doth the spryngyng well,
We passed on so far furth tyl we sawe
Rude Acheron, a lothsome lake to tell,
That boyles and bubs up swelth as blacke as hell,
Where grisly Charon at theyr fixed tide
Still ferries ghostes unto the farder side.

The aged god no sooner Sorowe spyed,
But hasting strayt unto the banke apace
With hollow call unto the rout he cryed,
To swarve apart, and geve the godesse place.
Strayt it was done, when to the shoar we pace,
Where hand in hand as we then linked faste,
Within the boate we are together plaste.

And furth we launch full fraughted to the brinke,
Whan with the unwonted weght, the rustye keele
Began to cracke as if the same should sinke.
We hoyse up mast and sayle, that in a whyle
We set the shore, where scarcely we had while
For to arryve, but that we heard anone
A thre sound barke confounded al in one.

We had not long furth past, but that we sawe,
Blacke Cerberus the hydeous hound of hell,
With bristles reard, and with a thre mouthed jawe,
Foredinning the ayr with his horrible yel.
Out of the diepe dark cave where he did dwell,
The goddesse strayt he knewe, and by and by
He peaste and couched, while that we passed by.

Thence cum we to the horrour and the hel,
The large great kyngdomes, and the dreadful raygne
Of Pluto in his trone where he dyd dwell,

The wyde waſte places, and the hugye playne:
The waylinges, ſhrykes, and ſundry ſortes of payne,
The ſyghes, the ſobbes, the diep and deadly groane,
Earth, ayer, and all reſounding playnt and moane.

Here pewled the babes, and here the maydes unwed
With folded handes theyr ſory chaunce bewayled;
Here wept the gyltles ſlayne, and lovers dead,
That ſlewe them ſelves when nothing elſe avayled:
A thouſand ſortes of ſorrowes here that wayled
With ſighes and teares, ſobs, ſhrykes, and all yſere,
That (oh, alas!) it was a hel to heare.

We ſtayed us ſtrayt, and wyth a rufull feare,
Beheld this heavy ſight, while from mine eyes
The vapored teares downſtilled here and there,
And Sorowe eke in far more woful wyſe,
Looke on with playnt, up heaving to the ſkyes
Her wretched handes, that with her cry the rout
Gan all in heapes to ſwarme us round about.

Loe here (ſaid Sorrowe) prynces of renowne,
That whilom ſat on top of Fortune's wheele
Now layed ful lowe, like wretches whurled downe,
Even with one frowne, that ſtayed but with a ſmyle,
And now beholde the thing that thou erewhile,
Saw only in thought, and what thou now ſhalt heare
Recompt the ſame to Keſar, King, and Pier.

Then firſt came Henry Duke of Buckingham,
His cloke of blacke al pilde and quite forworne,
Wringing his handes, and Fortune ofte doth blame,
Which of a duke hath made him now her ſkorne.
With ghaſtly lookes as one in manner lorne,
Oft ſpred his armes, ſtretcht handes he joynes as faſt,
With ruful chere, and vapored eyes upcaſt.

His cloke he rent, his manly breaſt he beat,
His heare al torne about the place it laye,
My hart ſo molte to ſee his griefe ſo great,
As felingly me thought it dropt awaye:
His iyes they whurled about withouten ſtaye,
With ſtormy ſyghes the place dyd ſo complayne,
As if his hart at eche had burſt in twayne.

Thryſe he began to tell his doleful tale,
And thryſe the ſighes did ſwallowe up his voyce,
At eche of which he ſhryked ſo wythal
As though the heavens vied with the noyſe:
Tyll at the laſt recovering his voyce,
Supping the teares that all his breſt beraynde,
On cruel Fortune weeping thus he playnde.

THE COMPLAYNT

OF

HENRYE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

Who truſtes to much in honour's higheſt trone
And warely watche not ſly dame Fortune's ſnare:
Or who in courte will beare the ſwaye alone,
And wyſely weygh not how to wyeld the care,
Beholde he me, and by my death beware:
Whom flattering Fortune falſely ſo begylde,
That loe ſhe ſlewe, where erſt ſul ſmooth ſhe ſmylde.

And Sackevylle ſith in purpoſe nowe thou haſt
The woful fal of prynces to diſcryve,
Whom Fortune both uplyft, and gayn downe caſt,
To ſhewe thereby the unſurety in this life,
Mark wel my fal, which I ſhall ſhewe belyve,
And paynt it furth that all eſtates may knowe:
Have they the warning, and be mine the woe.

For noble bloud made me both prince and pier,
Yea pierles too, had reaſon purchaſt place,
And God with giftes endowed me largely here.
But what avayles his giftes, where fayles his grace:
My mothers ſyer ſprong of a kyngly race
And calde was Edmund Duke of Somerſet,
Bereft of lyfe ere tyme by nature ſet.

Whoſe faythful hart to Henry ſyrt ſo wrought,
That never he hym in weale or woe forſooke,
Tyl laſtly he at Tewxbury ſyeld was cought
Wherewith an axe his violent death he toke:
He never could Kyng Edwardes party brooke,
Tyll by his death he vouchte that quarell good,
In which his ſyer and graundſyer ſpylt theyr bloud.

And ſuch was erſt my fathers cruell chaunce,
Of Stafford Earle, by name that Humfrey hyght,
Who ever preſt dyd Henries parte avaunce,
And never ceaſt tyl at Saynt Albones fight
He loſt his lyfe, as than did many a knyght:
Where eke my graundſyer Duke of Buckingham
Was wounded ſore, and hardly ſkapte untane.

But what may boote to ſtay the ſiſters three?
When Atropos perforce wil cut the threde:
The doleful day was come when you might ſee
Northampton fyeld with armed men oreſpred,
Where fate would algates have my graundſyer dead:
So ruſhing furth amyds the ſyerceſt fight,
He lived and dyed there in his maſters ryght.

In place of whom, as it befel my lot,
Like on a ſtage, ſo ſtept I in ſtrayt waye,
Enjoying there but wofully, God wot,
As he that had a ſlender part to playe:
To teache therby, in earth no ſtate may ſtay,
But as our partes abridge, or length our age,
So paſſe we all, while others ſyll the ſtage.

For of my ſelfe, the drery fate to playne,
I was ſometime a prince withouten pier,
When Edward Fift began his ruful raygne,
Ay me, then I began that hateſull yeare,
To cumpas that which I have bought ſo deare:
I bare the ſwynge, I and that wretched wyght,
The Duke of Gloceſter that Rychard hyght.

For when the fates had reft that royal prince
Edward the Fourth, chiefe myrrour of that name,
The Duke and I faſt joyned ever ſince,
In faythfull love, our ſecrete driftes to frame:
What he thought beſt to me ſo ſeemde the ſame,
My ſelfe not bent ſo much for to aſpyer,
As to fulfyl that greedy Dukes deſyre;

Ne prowde hyghe towers that preaced to the ſkye,
His cruel hart of ſafetie could aſſure:
But dreading them whom he ſhould deeme moſt ſure,
Hym ſelfe his beard wyth burning brand would [cear,
Of death deſervde ſo vexed him the feare.

This might ſuffice to repreſent the fine
Of tyrantes force, theyr feares, and theyr unreſt.
But hear this one, although my hart repyne
To let the ſound once ſynk wythin my breſt;
Of fell Phereus, that above the reſt,
Such lothſum crueltee on his people wrought,
As (oh alas) I tremble wyth the thought.

Sum he encaſed in the coates of beares,
Among wylde beaſtes devoured ſo to be:
And ſum for preye unto the hunters ſpeares,
Lyke ſavage beaſtes withouten ruth to dye.
Sumtime to encreaſe his horrible crueltye,
The quicke with face to face engraved hee,
Eche others death, that eche mought living ſee.

Loe what more cruell horror mought be found,
To purchaſe feare, if feare could ſtaye his raygne?
It booted not, it rather ſtrake the wounde
Of feare in him, to feare the lyke agayne.
And ſo he dyd full ofte and not in vayne:
As in his life his cares could wytneſs well
But moſte of all his wretched ende doth tell.

His owne dere wyfe whom as his life he loved,
He durſt not truſt, nor proche unto her bed,
But cauſing fyrſt his ſlave with naked ſworde
To go before, him ſelfe with tremblyng dread
Strayt foloweth faſt, and whorling in his head
His rolling iyen, he ſearcheth here and there
The diepe daunger that he ſo ſore did feare.

For not in vayne it ranſt yll in his breſt,
Sum wretched hap ſhould hale him to his ende.
And therefore alwaye by his pillowe preſt
Had he a ſworde, and with that ſworde he wende,
In vayne (God wote) all peryls to defende:
For loe his wife foreyrked of his rayne,
Sleeping in bed this cruell wretche hath ſlayne.

What ſhould I more now ſeeke to ſay in this?
Or one jot farder linger furth my tale?
With cruel Nero, or with Phalaris,
Caligula, Domician, and all
The cruell route? or of theyr wretched fall?
I can no more, but in my name advert
Al earthly powers beware of tyrants hart.

And as our ſtate endured but a throwe;
So beſt in us the ſtaye of ſuch a ſtate
May beſt appeare to hang an overthrowe,
And better teache tyrantes deſerved hate
Than any tyrantes death to fore or late.
So cruell ſeemde this Rychard Thyrd to me,
That loe my ſelfe now loathde his crueltee.

For when, alas! I ſaw the tyrant kyng
Content not only from his nephewes twayne
To ryve worldes blyſſe, but alſo al worldes beyng,
Saunce earthly gylt ycauſing both be ſlayne,
My hart agreyved that ſuch a wretch ſhould raygne,
Whoſe bluddy breſt ſo ſalvaged out of kynde,
That Phalaris had never ſo bluddy a minde.

Ne could I brooke him once wythin my breſt,
But wyth the thought my teeth would gnaſhe wythal:
For though I earſt wer his by ſworne beheſt;
Yet when I ſawe miſchiefe on miſchiefe fall,
So diepe in blud, to murder prynce and all,
Ay then thought I, alas, and wealaway,
And to my ſelfe thus mourning would I ſay.

If neyther love, kynred, ne knot of bloud,
His own alegeaunce to his prynce of dne,
Nor yet the ſtate of truſt wherein he ſtoode,
The worldes defame, nor nought could turne him true. [rue?
Thoſe gyltleles babes, could they not make him
Nor could theyr youth, nor innocence withal
Move him from reving them theyr lyfe and all?

Alas, it could not move him any jote,
Ne make him once to rue or wet his iye,
Sturde him no more than that that ſtyrreth not:
But as the rocke or ſtone that wyl not plye,
So was his hart made hard to crueltye,
To murder them; alas I weepe in thought,
To thinke on that which this fell wretche hath wrought.

That nowe when he had done the thing he ſought,
And as he would, complyſht and cumpaſt all,
And ſawe and knewe the treaſon he had wrought
To God and man, to ſlaye his prynce and all,
Then ſeemde he fyrſt to doubte and dreade us all,
And me in chiefe, whoes death all meanes he myght,
He ſought to wurke by malice and by might.

Such heapes of harmes upharbard in his breſt,
With envyous hart my honour to deface,
As knowing he that I whych wated beſt
His wretched dryftes, and all his curſed caſe,
If ever ſprang within me ſparke of grace,
Muſt nedes abhorre him and his hatefull race:
Now more and more can caſt me out of grace.

Which ſodayne chaunge, when I by ſecrete chaunce,
Had well perceyved by prooſe of envious frowne,
And ſawe the lot that did me to advaunce
Hym to a kyng that ſought to caſt me downe,
To late it was to linger any ſtowne:
Syth preſent choyſe lay caſt before myne iye,
To wurke his death, or I my ſelfe to dye.

And as the knyght in fyeld among his foes,
Beſet wyth ſwurdes, muſt ſlay or there be ſlayne:
So I, alas, lapt in a thouſand woes,
Beholding death in every fyde ſo playne,
I rather choſe by ſum ſlye ſecrete trayne
To wurke his death, and I to lyve thereby,
Than he to lyve, and I of force to dye.

Which heavy choyſe ſo haſtened me to choſe,
That I in parte agryeved at his diſdayne,
In part to wreke the doleſull death of thoſe
Two tender babes, his ſillye nephewes twayne,
By him alas commaunded to be ſlayne,
With paynted chere humbly before his face,
Strayght tooke my leave, and rode to Brecknocke place.

And there as cloſe and covert as I myght.
My purpoſed practiſe to his paſſe to bryng,
In ſecrete dryftes, I lingred day and night:
All howe I might depoſe this cruell kyng,
That ſeemd to all ſo much deſyred a thyng,
As thereto truſting I empryſde the ſame;
But to much truſting brought me to my bane.

For while I nowe had fortune at my becke,
Miſtruſting I no earthly thing at all,
Unwares, alas, leaſt looking for a checke,
She mated me in turning of a ball:
When leaſt I fearde, then nereſt was my fall,
And when whole hoaſtes wer preſt to ſtroy my foen,
She chaunged her chere, and left me poſt alone.

I had uprayſde a mighty band of men,
And marched furth in order of array,
Leadyng my power amyd the foreſt Dene,
Agaynſt that tyrant banner to diſplaye:
But loe my ſouldiers cowardly ſhranke away.
For ſuch is fortune when ſhe lyſt to frowne;
Who ſeemes moſt ſure, him ſooneſt whurles ſhe downe

O let no prynce put truſt in commontie,
Nor hope in fayth of gyddy peoples mynde,
But let all noble men take hede by me,
That by the proofe to well the payne do fynde:
Loe, where is truth or truſt? or what could bynde
The vayne people, but they will ſwarve and ſwaye,
As chaunce brynge chaunge, to dryve and draw that way?

Rome, thou that once advaunced up ſo hye,
Thy ſlaye, patron, and flower of excellence,
Haſt nowe throwen him to depth of miſerye,
Exiled him that was thy whole defence,
He compteſt it not an horryble offence:
To reven him of honour and of fame,
That wan it thee, when thou hadſt loſt the ſame.

Beholde Camillus, he that erſt revyved
The ſtate of Rome, that dyeng he dyd fynde,
Of his own ſtate is nowe alas depryved,
Baniſht by them whom he dyd thus det bynde:
That cruel folke, unthankeful and unkynde,
Declared wel theyr falſe inconſtancye,
And fortune eke her mutability.

And thou Scipio, a myrrour mayſt thou be
To all nobles, that they learn not too late,
Howe they once truſt the unſtable commontye,
Thou that recuredſt the torne diſmembred ſtate,
Even when the conquerour was at the gate,
Art now expide, as though thou not deſerved
To reſt in her, whom thou hadſt ſo preſerved.

Ingrateful Rome haſt ſhewed thy crueltye,
On hym, by whom thou lyveſt yet in fame,
But nor thy dede, nor his deſert ſhall dye,
But his owne wurdes ſhal witnes aye the ſame:
For loe hys grave doth thee moſt juſtly blame.
And with diſdayne in marble ſayes to thee:
Unkynde countrey, my bones ſhalt thou not ſee.

What more unwurthy than this his eryle:
More juſt than this the wofull playnt he wrote:
Or who could ſhewe a playner proofe the while,
Of moſte falſe fayth, than they that thus forgot
His great deſertes: that ſo deſerved not:
His cindres yet loe, doth he them denye,
That him denyed amongſt them for to dye.

Milciades, O happy haſt thou be,
And well rewarded of thy countrey men.
If in the fyeld when thou hadſt forſt to flye
By thy prowes, thre hundred thouſand men,
Content they had bene to eryle thee then:
And not to caſt thee in depth priſon ſo,
Laden wyth gyves to ende thy lyfe in woe.

Alas howe harde and ſteely hartes had they,
That not contented there to have thee dye,
With fettred gyves in pryſon where thou laye,
Increaſt ſo far in hateful crueltye,
That buryall to thy corps, they eke denye
He wyl they graunt the ſame tyll thy ſonne have
Put on thy gyves to purchaſe thee a grave.

Loe Hanniball as long as fired fate,
And bryttle fortune had ordayned ſo,
Who ever more advaunt his countrey ſtate
Then thou, that lyvedſt for her and for no moe:
But when the ſtormy waves began to grow,
Without reſpect of thy deſertes erwhile,
Art by thy countrey throwen into exyle.

Unfrendly Fortune, ſhall I thee now blame:
Or ſhal I faulte the fates that ſo ordayne?
Or art thou Jove the cauſer of the ſame?
Or crueltie her ſelfe, doth ſhe conſtrayne?
Or on whom els alas ſhal I complayne?
O truſtles world I can accuſen none,
But fyckle fayth of commontye alone.

The polipus nor the chameleon ſtraunge,
That turne them ſelves to every hewe they ſee,
Are not ſo full of bayne and fickle chaunge
As is this falſe unſtedfaſt commontye.
Loe I alas with mine adverſitie
Have tryed it true, for they are fled and gone,
And of an hoſt there is not left me one.

That I alas in this calamitie
Alone was left, and to my ſelfe mought playne
This treaſon, and this wretched cowardye,
And eke with teares bewepen and complayne
My hateful hap, ſtyll lookyng to be ſlayne.
Wandryng in woe, and to the gods on hye
Cleapyng for vengeance of this treacherye.

And as the turtle that hath loſt her make,
Whom grypyng ſorowe doth ſo ſore attaynt,
With doleful voyce and ſound whych ſhe doth make
Mourning her loſſe, fylles all the grove with playnt;
So I, alas! forſaken, and forſaynt,
With reſtles foote the wud coine up and downe,
Which of my dole al ſhyvering doth reſowne.

And beyng thus alone, and all forſake,
Amyd the thycke, forwandred in deſpayer,
As one diſmayed ne wyſt what waye to take,
Untyll at laſt gan to my mynde repayer,
A man of mine called Humfrey Banaſtar:
Wherewyth me ſeeling much recomforted,
In hope of ſuccour to his houſe I fled.

Who beyng one whom earſt I had upbrought
Even from his youth, and loved and lyked beſt,
To gentrye ſtate avaunciug him from nought;
And had in ſecrete truſt above the reſt,
Of ſpecyal truſt nowe being thus dyſtreſt
Full ſecreatly to him I me conveyed
Not doubting there but I ſhould fynde ſome ayde.

But out alas on cruell treecherye,
When that this cayticf once an ynklyng hard,
How that Kyng Rychard had proclaymde, that he
Which me deſcryed ſhould have for his rewarde
A thouſand poundes, and farther be prefarde,
His truthe ſo turnde to treaſon, all diſtaynde,
That fayth quyte fled, and I by truſt was traynde.

For by this wretch I beyng ſtrayt betrayed,
To one John Mitton, ſhiriffe of Shropſhire then,
All ſodaynely was taken, and convayed
To Saliſbury, wyth rout of harneſt men,
Unto Kyng Rychard there encamped then:
Faſt by the citye with a myghtye hoſte
Withouten doome where head and lyfe I loſt.

And with theſe wordes, as if the are even there
Diſmembred had his head and corps aparte,
Dead fel he downe: and we in woful feare
Stoode mazed when he would to lyef revert:
But deadly griefes ſtill grewe about his hart,
That ſtyll he laye, ſumtyme revived wyth payne,
And wyth a ſygh becuming dead agayne.

Mydnyght was cum, and every vitall thing
With ſwete ſound ſlepe theyr weary lyms did reſt,
The beaſtes were ſtill, the lytle hyrdes that ſyng,
Nowe ſweetely ſlept beſides theyr mothers breſt:
The olde and all were ſhrowded in theyr neſt.
The waters calme, the cruel ſeas did ceas,
The wuds, the fyeldes, and all thinges held theyr peace.

The golden ſtars wer whyrlde amyd thyer race,
And on the earth did laugh with twinkling lyght,
When eche thing neſtled in his reſtyng place,
Forgat dayes payne with pleaſure of the nyght:
The hare had not the greedy houndes in ſight,
The fearfull dear of death ſtood not in doubt,
The partrydge drept not of the falcons ſoot.

The ougly beare nowe myndeth not the ſtake;
Nor how the cruell maſtyves do hym tear;
The ſtag lay ſtill unrouſed from the brake,
The ſomy boar feard not the hunters ſpear.
All thing was ſtill in deſert, buſh, and brear.
With quyet heart now from their travailes reſt,
Soundly they ſlept in midſt of all their reſt.

When Buckyngham amidſt his plaint oppreſt,
With ſurgyng ſorowes and with pinching paynes
In ſort thus ſowned, and with a ſigh he ceaſt.
To tellen furth the treachery and the traynes,
Of Banaſtar, which him ſo ſore diſtraynes.
That from a ſigh he falles into a ſounde,
And from a ſounde lyeth ragyng on the ground.

So twiching wer the panges that he aſſayed,
And he ſo ſore with rufull rage diſtraught,
To thinke upon the wretch that hym betrayed,
Whom earſt he made a gentylman of naught,
That more and more agreved with this thought,
He ſtormes out ſighes, and with redoubled ſore,
Stroke with the furies, rageth more and more.

Who ſo hath ſeene the bull chaſed with dartes,
And with dyepe woundes forgald and gored ſo;
Tyl he oppreſſed with the deadlye ſmartes,
Fall in a rage, and runne upon his foe,
Let him I ſaye, beholde the ragyng woe
Of Buckyngham, that in theſe grypes of gryefe
Rageth gaynſt him that hath betrayed his lyef.

With blud red iyen he ſtareth here and there,
Frothing at mouth, with face as pale as cloute:
When loe my lymmes were trembling all for feare,
And I amazde ſtoode ſtyll in dread and doubt,
While I mought ſee him throwe his armes about:
And gaynſt the ground him ſelfe plounge with ſuch force,
As if the lyfe forth wyth ſhould leave the corps.

With ſmoke of ſyghes ſumtyme I myght beholde
The place al dymde, like to the mornyng myſt:
And ſtrayt agayne the teares how they downrolde
Alongſt his cheekes, as if the ryvers hyſt:
Whoes flowing ſtreemes ne wer no ſooner whiſt,
But to the ſtars ſuch dreadfull ſhoutes he ſent,
As if the trone of mighty Jove ſhould rent.

And I the while with ſpirites wel nye bereft,
Beheld the plyght and panges that dyd him ſtraine,
And howe the blud his deadly colour left,
And ſtrayt returnde with flamyng red agayne:
When ſodaynly amid his ragyng payne,
He gave a ſygh, and with that ſygh he fayed:
O! Banaſtar, and ſtrayt agayne he ſtayed.

Dead laye his corps as dead as any ſtone,
Tyll ſwellyng ſyghes ſtormyng within his breſt
Upraiſde his head, that downe ward fell anone,
With lookes upcaſt, and ſyghes that never ceaſt:
Furth ſtreamde the teares, recordes of his unreſt,
When he wyth ſhrykes thus groveling on the ground,
Ybrayed theſe wordes with ſhryll and doleful ſound.

Heaven and earth, and ye eternal lampes
That in the heavens wrapt, wyl us to reſt,
Thou bryght Phebe, that cleareſt the nightes dampes,
Witnes the playntes that in theſe panges oppreſt
I woſul wretche unlade out of my breſt.
And let me yeald my laſt wordes ere I part,
You, you, I call to record of my ſmart,

And thou, Alecto, feede me wyth thy foode,
Let fal thy ſerpentes from thy ſnaky heare,
For ſuch relyeſe wel fittes me in this moode,
To feede my playnt with horror and wyth feare,
While rage afreſhe thy venomd worme arear.
And thou Sibilla, when thou ſeeſt me faynte,
Addres thy ſelfe the gyde of my complaynt.

And thou, O Jove, that with thy depe fordoome
Doſt rule the earth, and raygne above the ſkyes,
That wrekeſt wronges, and geveſt the dreadful doome
Agaynſt the wretche that doth thy trone deſpyſe,
Receyve theſe wurdes, and wreake them in ſuch wyſe,
As heaven and earth may witneſſe and beholde,
Thy heapes of wrath upon this wretche unfolde.

Thou, Banaſter, gaynſt thee I clepe and call
Unto the gods, that they juſt vengeaunce take
On thee, thy bloud, thy ſtayned ſtocke and all:
O Jove, to thee, above the reſt I make
My humble playnt, guyde me that what I ſpeake
May be thy wyll upon thys wretche to fall,
On thee, Banaſtar, wretche of wretches all.

O would to God, that cruel diſmal daye,
That gave me lyght fyrſt to behold thy face,
With fowle eclipſe had reft my ſyght away:
The unhappy hower, the tyme, and eke the place,
The ſunne and moone, the ſters, and all that was
In theyr aſpectes helping in ought to thee,
The earth, and ayer, and all accurſed bee.

And thou, caytief, that like a monſtar ſwarved,
From kynde and kyndenes, haſt thy mayſter lorne,
Whom neyther truth, nor truſt wherein thou ſerved,
Ne his deſertes, could move, nor thy fayth ſworne
Howe ſhall I curſe, but wyſh that thou unborne
Had bene, or that the earth had rent in twaye,
And ſwallowed thee in cradle as thou laye.

To this did I even from thy tender youth
Witſave to bryng thee up: dyd I therefore
Beleve the oath of thy undoubted trouth?
Advaunce thee up, and truſt thee evermore?
By truſting thee that I ſhould dye therefore?
O wretche, and wurſe than wretche, what ſhal I ſay,
But cleap and curſe gaynſt thee and thyne for aye?

Hated be thou, diſdaynd of every wyght,
And poynted at where ever that thou goe,
A trayterous wretche, unwurthy of the light,
Be thou eſtemed: and to encreaſe thy woe,
The ſound be hateſull of thy name alſo;
And in this ſort with ſhame and ſharpe reproche,
Leade thou thy life till greater grief approch.

Dole and deſpayer, let thoſe be thy delight,
Wrapped in woes that can not be unfolde,
To wayle the day, and wepe the weary night,
With rayny iyen and ſyghes can not be tolde,
And let no wyght thy woe ſeeke to withholde:
But coumpt thee wurthy (wretche) of ſorrowes ſtore,
That ſuffryng much, oughteſt ſtill to ſuffer more.

Deſerve thou death, yea be thou demed to dye
A ſhameſull death, to ende thy ſhameſull lyſe:
A fyght longed for, joyfull to everye iye,
Whan thou ſhalt be arraygned as a thief,
Standing at bar, and pleading for thy lyef,
With trembling toung in dread and dolors rage,
Lade with white lockes, and fowerſkore yeres of age.

Yet ſhall not death delyver thee ſo ſoone
Out of thy woes, ſo happye ſhalt thou not bee:
But to the eternal Jove this is my boone,
That thou may live thine eldeſt ſonne to ſee
Reft of his wits, and in a fowle bores ſtye
Te ende his dayes in rage and death diſtreſt,
A wurthy tumbe where one of thyne ſhould reſt.

And after this, yet pray I more, thou may
Thy ſecond ſonne ſee drowned in a dyke,
And in ſuch ſorte to cloſe his latter daye,
As heard or ſeen earſt hath not bene the lyke:
Yſtrangled in a puddle not ſo deepe
As halfe a foote, that ſuch hard loſſe of lyfe,
So cruelly chaunſt, may be thy greater gryefe.

And not yet ſhall thy hugie ſorrowes ceaſe;
Jove ſhal not ſo withholde his wrath fro thee,
But that thy plagues may more and more increaſe,
Thou ſhalt ſtill lyve, that thou thy ſelfe mayſt ſee
Thy deare doughter ſtroken with leproſye:
That ſhe that earſt was all thy hole delyght,
Thou now mayſt loath to have her cum in ſight.

And after that, let ſhame and ſorrowes gryeſe
Feede furth thy yeares continually in wo,
That thou mayeſt live in death, and dye in lyef,
And in this ſorte forewayld and wearyed ſo,
At length thy ghoſt to parte thy body fro:
This pray I Jove, and wyth this latter breath,
Vengeaunce I aſke upon my cruell death.

This ſayd, he ſloung his retchles armes abrode,
And groveling flat upon the ground he lay,
Which with his teeth he al to gnaſht and gnawed:
Depe groanes he ſet, as he that would awaye.
But loe in vayne he dyd the death aſſay:
Although I thinke was never man that knewe,
Such deadly paynes where death dyd not enſewe.

So ſtrove he thus a while as with the death,
Nowe pale as lead, and colde as any ſtone.
Nowe ſtyl as calme, nowe ſtorming forth a breath
Of ſmoaky ſyghes, as breath and al were gone:
But every thing hath ende: ſo he anone

Came to him ſelfe, when wyth a ſygh outbrayed,
With woful cheare theſe woful wurdes he ſayd.

Ah where am I, what thing, or whence is this?
Who reft my wyts? or howe do I thus lye?
My lims do quake, my thought agaſted is,
Why ſyghe I ſo? or whereunto do I
Thus grovel on the ground: and by and by
Uprayſde he ſtoode, and wyth a ſygh hath ſtayed,
When to him ſelfe returned, thus he ſayed.

Suffiſeth nowe this playnt and this regrete,
Whereof my hart his bottome hath unfraught:
And of my death let pieres and princes wete
The wolves untruſt, that they thereby be taught.
And in her wealth, ſith that ſuch chaunge is wrought,
Hope not to much, but in the myds of all
Thinke on my death, and what may them befall.

So long as fortune would permyt the ſame,
I lyved in rule and ryches wyth the beſt:
And paſt my time in honour and in fame;
That of miſhap no feare was in my breſt:
But falſe fortune whan I ſuſpected leaſt,
Dyd turne the wheele, and wyth a dolefull fall
Hath me bereft of honour, life, and all.

Loe what avayles in ryches fluds that flowes:
Though ſhe ſo ſmylde as all the world wer his:
Even kinges and keſars byden fortunes throwes,
And ſimple ſorte muſt bear it as it is.
Take hede by me that blithd in balefull bliſſe:
My rule, my riches, royall blud and all,
Whan fortune frounde, the feller made my fall.

For hard miſhaps that happens unto ſuch,
Whoes wretched ſtate earſt never fell no chaunge,
Agryve them not in any part ſo much,
As theyr diſtres to whome it is ſo ſtraunge,
That all theyr lyves nay paſſed pleaſures raunge:
Theyr ſodayne wo that ay wield welth at will,
Algates their hartes more pearcingly muſt thrill.

For of my byrth, my blud was of the beſt,
Fyrſt borne an Earle, than Duke by due diſcent:
To ſwinge the ſway in court amonge the reſt,
Dame Fortune me her rule moſt largely lent:
And kynd with corage ſo my corps had blent,
That loe on whom but me dyd ſhe moſt ſmyle:
And whom but me lo, dyd ſhe moſt begyle?

Now haſt thou heard the whole of my unhap,
My chaunce, my chaunge, the cauſe of all my care:
In wealth and wo, how fortune dyd me wrap,
With world at will to win me to her ſnare.
Byd kynges, byd keſars, byd all ſtates beware,
And tell them this from me that tryed it true:
Who reckles rules, right ſoone may hap to rue.

A GLOSSARY.

A, which is commonly called the indefinite article, is really nothing more than a corruption of the Saxon adjective *ane* or *an*, before a ſubſtantive beginning with a conſonant.—It is ſometimes prefixed to another adjective, the ſubſtantive to which both belong being underſtood, *e. g.* A Frere there was, a wanton and a mery. —It is alſo joined to nouns plural taken collectively, as, an hundred frankes, a thouſand frankes, —and to ſuch as are not uſed in the ſingular number, as a liſtes. So the Latins ſaid *Unæ literæ*, Cic. ad Att. v. 9, and the French formerly *unes lices, unes lettres, unes tréves. Froiſſart*, v. i. c. 153, 237, v. ii. c. 78

A, *prep.* before a gerund, is a corruption of on. To go a begging, i. e. on begging. The prep. is often expreſſed at length; on hunting ben they ridden; To ride on hawking.—In the ſame manner, before a noun it is generally a corruption of on or in; *e. g.* a'bed; a'fire; a'Goddes name; a'morwe; a'night; a'werke; though in ſome of theſe inſtances perhaps it may as well be ſuppoſed to be a corruption of at.—A, in compoſition, in words of Saxon original, is an abbreviation of af or of, of at, of on or in, and often only a corruption of the prepoſitive particle ge or y. In words of French original it is generally to be deduced from the Latin ab, ad, and ſometimes ex

A, *interj.* ah!

Abacke, *adv. Sax.* backwards

Abaiſt, *part. pa. Fr.* abaſhed, aſhamed

Abate, *v. Fr.* to beat down

Abawed, *part. pa. Fr.* eſbai, aſtoniſhed; I was abawed for marvelle. *Orig.* Moult m'eſbahy de la merveille

Abegge, abeye, abie, *v. Sax.* to ſuffer for

Abet, *n. Sax.* help

Abide, *v. Sax.* to ſtay

Abidden, **Abiden** } *part. pa*

Abit *for* abideth

Able, *adj. Fr.* fit, proper

Abote, *part. pa.* of abate

Abought, *part. pa.* of abegge

Abouten, *prep. Sax. on-bucan*, about

Abraide, *v. Sax.* to awake, to ſtart. See Braide

Abraide, *pa. t.* awaked, ſtarted.

Abrede, *adv. Sax.* abroad

Abrege, *v. Fr.* to ſhorten, to abridge

Abroche, *v. Fr.* to tap, to ſet abroach; ſpoken of a veſſel of liquor

Abuſion, *n. Fr.* abuſe, impropriety

Acceſſe, *n. Fr.* properly the approach of a fever, a fever

Accidie, *n. Fr.* from Ἀκηδία, *Gr.* negligence; ariſing from diſcontent, melancholy, &c.

Accord, *n. Fr.* agreement

Accord, *v. Fr.* to agree

Accordeden, *pa. t. pl.*

Accordant, **According**, } *part. pr.*

Accuſe, *v. Fr.* to diſcover

Achate, *n. Fr.* purchaſe

Achatour, *n. Fr.* a purchaſer, a caterer

Acheked, *part. pa. Sax.* choked

Acheve, *v. Fr.* to accompliſh

Ackele, (akele) *v. Sax.* to cool

Acloye, *v.* may perhaps mean to cloy, to embarraſs with ſuperfluity

Acoiè, *v. Fr.* to make quiet

Acomberd, *part pa. Fr.* encombered

Acroke, *adj. Fr.* crooked, awkward.

Adawe, *v. Sax.* to awake

Ado, *v. Sax.* to do; it is uſed to expreſs the Fr. à faire, to have ado; to have to do; and don all that they han ado. *Et facent ce qu'ils doivent* faire.

Adon, (corruption of of-don) *part. pa. Sax.* done away

Adon, *pr. n.* Adonis

Adoun, *adv. Sax.* downward

Adrad, adrade, *part. pa.* of adrede, *v. Sax.* afraid

Adriane for Ariadne, *pr. n.*

Advertence, *n. Fr.* attention

Advocacies, *n. pl. Fr.* law-ſuits

Advocas, *n. pl. Fr.* lawyers, advocates

Afered, aferde, *part. pa. Sax.* afraid, frightened

Affecte, *n. Lat.* affection

Affermed, *part. pa. Fr.* confirmed

Affie, *v. Fr.* to truſt

Affray, *v. Fr.* to affright

Affray, *n. Fr.* diſturbance, fear

Affriken, *pr. n.* the elder Scipio Africanus

Afile, *v. Fr.* to file, poliſh

Aforen, aforne, afore, *adv. prep. Sax. at-foran*, before.

Again, *prep. Sax.* againſt, toward, *adv*
Agaſte, *v. Sax.* to terrify
Agaſt, for agaſted, *part.. pa.* terrified
Agathon, *pr. n.* I have nothing to ſay concerning this writer, except that one of the ſame name is quoted in the prol. to the tragedie of Cambiſes, by Thomas Preſton. There is no ground for ſuppoſing, with Gloſſ. Ur. that a philoſopher of Samos is meant, or any of the Agathoes of antiquity
Ageins, *prep.* againſt
Agen, *adv.* again
Agilte, *v. Sax.* to offend, to ſin againſt
Agilte, for agilted, *pa. t.* ſinned
Ago, agon, for ygon, *part. pa. Sax.* gone, paſt
Agree, *Fr.* à gré, in good part
Agrefe, (a'grefe) in grief
Agrege, *v. Fr.* to aggravate
Agreved, *part. pa. Fr.* injured, agrieved
Agriſe, *v. Sax.* to ſhudder, to make to ſhudder
Agroſe, *pa. t.* ſhuddered, trembled
Agroted, *part. pa.* cloyed, ſurfeited; agrotone with mete or drinke. *Ingurgito.* Prompt. parv.
Aguiler, *n. Fr.* a needle-caſe
Ajuſt, *v. Fr.* to apply
Akehorns, *n. pl. Sax.* acorns
Aknowe, *part. pa. Sax.* to ben aknowe; I am aknowe; I acknowledge
Al, alle, *adj. Sax.* all; al and ſom, the whole thing, at al, in the whole; over all, through the whole; in alle manere wiſe, by every kind of means; at alle rightes, with every thing requiſite
Alain, *pr. n.* a poet and divine of the 12th century. Beſide his *Planctus Naturæ*, or Plaint of Kinde, which is here quoted, he wrote another poem in Latin verſe, called Anticlaudianus. For the reſt of his works ſee *Fabric. Bibl. Med. Æt.* in v. *Alanus de Inſulis*
Alder, aller, *gen. ca. pl.* of all; it is frequently joined in compoſition with adjectives of the ſuperl. deg. *e. g.* alderfirſt; alderlaſt; alderleveſt; firſt, laſt, deareſt of all
Al, all, *adv. Sax.* generally anſwers to the Lat. *omnino*; al alone, quite alone; al hol, entire; al holly, entirely; all in one, at the ſame time; all newe, anew; al only, ſolely, ſingly. It is ſometimes uſed elliptically for although, or all be it that; all tell I not now as now his obſervances; all be ye not of o complexion
Alarged, *part. pa. Fr.* eſtargi, given largely
Alauns, *n. pl.* a ſpecies of dog. They were much eſteemed in Italy in the 14th century. *Gualv. de la flamma*, [ap. Murator. Antiq. Med. Æ. t. 11. p. 394,] commends the governors of Milan, "quod equos emiſſarios equabus magnis commiſcuerunt, et procreati ſunt in noſtro territorio Deſtrarii nobiles, qui in magno pretio habentur. Item *Canes Alanos* altæ ſtaturæ et mirabilis fortitudinis nutrire ſtuduerunt"
Alayne, *n. Fr.* allay, a mixture of baſe metal
Albification, *n. Lat.* a chemical term for making white [ſalt
Alcaly, *n. Arab.* a chemical term for a ſpecies of
Alchymiſtre, *n. Fr.* alchymiſt
Aldrian, *pr. n.* a ſtar on the neck of the lion, Sp.
Ale and bred. This oath of Sire Thopas on ale and bred was perhaps intended to ridicule the ſolemn vows which were frequently made in the days of chivalry to a peacock, a pheaſant, or ſome other noble bird. See *M. de Sainte Palaye, Sur l'anc. cheval. Mem. IIIme.* I will add here, from our own hiſtory, a moſt remarkable inſtance of this ſtrange practice. When Edward I. was ſetting out upon his laſt expedition to Scotland in 1306, he knighted his eldeſt ſon and ſeveral other young noblemen with great ſolemnity. At the cloſe of the whole, (ſays Matthew of Weſtminſter, p. 454,) "Allati ſunt in pompaticâ gloria duo *cygni* vel *olores* ante regem, phalerati retibus aureis vel fiſtulis deauratis, deſiderabile ſpectaculum intuentibus. Quibus viſis, Rex *votum vovit Deo cæli et cygnis* ſe proficiſci in Scotiam, mortem Johannis Comynet fidem læſam Scotorum vivus ſive mortuus vindicaturus," &c. This practice is alluded to in Dunbar's wiſh, *that the king were Johne Thomſonnis man*, mſ. *Maitland*, ſt. 5.

I wold gif all that ever I have
To that condition, ſo God me ſaif,
That ye had *vowit to the ſwan*
Ane yeir to be Johne Thomſonnis man.

And ſo in the Prol. to the Contin. of The Cant. T. the Hoſteler ſays—I make a vowe to the pecock ther ſhall wake a foule miſt
Alege, *n. Fr.* to alleviate
Alegeance, *n. Fr.* alleviation
Aleis, *n. Fr.* aliſe, the lote tree
Alembikes, *n. pl. Fr.* veſſels for diſtilling, ſtills
Ale-ſtake, *n. Sax.* a ſtake ſet up before an alehouſe by way of ſign
Aleye, *n. Fr.* an alley
Algates, Algate, *adv. Sax.* always; toutesfois
Algezir, *pr. n.* a city of Spain
Alight, *v. Sax.* to deſcend; alight, *pa. t.* for alighted
Aliſandre, *pr. n.* Alexandria, a city in Egypt
Allege, *v. Fr.* to alledge
Almageſt, *pr. n.* the Arabs, called the Μεγαλη Συνταξις of Ptolomee Almageſthi or Almegiſthi, a corruption of Μεγιστη See D'Herbelot, in v.
Almandres, *n. pl. Fr.* almond trees
Almeſſe, *n. Sax.* from the Lat. Gr. eleemoſyna, alms, Almeſſes, *pl.*
Alnath, *pr. n.* the firſt ſtar in the horns of Aries, whence the firſt manſion of the moon takes its name, Sp.
Alonde, (a'londe) on land
Along, *prep. Sax.* whereon it was along, by what it was occaſioned; on me is nought along thine evil fare, thy ill fare is not occaſioned by me
Aloſed, *part. pa. Fr.* praiſed
Aloue, *v. Fr.* to allow, to approve, his dedes are to alowe for his hardyneſſe, therefore lords alow him litle, or lyſten to his reaſon
Alowe, *adv. Sax.* low
Alpes, *n. pl.* bulfinches
Als, *conj. Sax.* alſo, as

Amalgaming, a chemical term for mixing of quicklilver with any metal
Ambaſſatrie, *n. Fr.* embaſſy
Ambes as, two aces at dice, *Fr.*
Ambling, *part. pr. Fr.*
Amende, *v. Fr.* to mend
Amenuſe, *v Fr.* to leſſen
Ameved, *part. pa. Fr.* moved
Amias, *pr. n.* the city of Amiens
Amiddes, *prep. Sax.* at, or in the middle
Amis, *adv. Sax.* ill, badly. See Mis
Amoneſte, *v. Fr.* to admoniſh, to adviſe
Among, *adv. Sax.* together, at the ſame time, at the ſame place, *Du.* 298, ever among, ever at the ſame time, *Conf. Am.* 114, b.
Amonges, *prep. Sax.* among
Amorette, *n. Fr.* an amorous woman.—And eke as well by [r. be] amorettes.—*Car auſſi bien ſont amourettes*, orig.
Amorily, is perhaps put by miſtake for merrily.
Amortiſed, *part. pa. Fr.* killed
Amorwe, on the morrow [ſions
Amphibologies, *n. pl. Fr. Gr.* ambiguous expreſ-
An, for on, *prep.*
Ancille, *n. Lat.* a maid-ſervant
Ancre, *n. Fr.* anchor
And, *conj. Sax.* if
Anelace, *n.* a kind of knife or dagger, uſually worn at the girdle. See *Gloſſ. to M. Paris*, in v. *Analacius*
Anes, *adv.* for ones, once
Anhang, *v. Sax.* to hang up
Anientiſſed, *part. pa. Fr.* reduced to nothing
Anight, in the night
Anker, *n. Sax.* an anchorite or hermit
Annueller, *n.* a prieſt employed ſolely in ſinging annuals, or anniverſary maſſes for the dead
Annunciat, *part. pa. Lat.* foretold
Anoie, *n. Fr.* hurt, trouble
Anoie, *v.* to hurt, to trouble
Anoiful, *adj.* hurtful, unpleaſant
Antem, *n. Sax.* an anthem
Anticlaudian, the title of a Latin poem by Alanus de Inſulis. See *Alain*
Antilegius, *pr. n.* Antilochus, *Du.* 1064. [anthems
Antiphonere, *n. Lat. Gr.* a book of antiphones or
Anvelt, *n. Sax.* an anvil, *Du.* 1165.
Any, *adj. Sax.* either, one of two. It uſually ſignifies one of many
Apaid, *part. pa. Fr.* paid, ſatisfied
Apaire, *v. Fr.* See Apeire
Ape, *n. Sax.* metaphorically a fool, the monke put in the mannes hode an ape, and in his wife's eke, the monk made a fool of the man and of his wife too—Win of ape.
Apeire, *v. Fr.* to impair, to detract from; our ſtate it apeires—to be impaired, to go to ruin.
Apert, *adj. Fr.* open, prive and apert, in private and in public
Apies, for opies, *n. pl. Fr.* opiates
Appalled, *part. pa. Fr.* made pale
Apparaile, *v. Fr.* to prepare
Apparence, *n. Fr.* an appearance
Apperceive, *v. Fr.* to perceive
Apperceivings, *n. pl.* perceptions
Appetite, *v. Fr.* to deſire, to covet
Appoſe, *v. Fr.* to object to, to queſtion. It ſeems to be a corruption of oppoſe
Approver, *n. Fr.* an informer
Aprentiſe, *n. pl. Fr.* apprentices, novices
Aqueintable, *adj. Fr.* eaſy to be acquainted with
Aquite, *v. Fr.* to pay for
Arace, *v. Fr.* to draw away by force
Arande, *n. Sax.* a meſſage
Araye, *n. Fr.* order, ſituation, clothing, equipage
Araye, *v. Fr.* to dreſs, to diſpoſe.
Arblaſters, *n. pl. Fr.* arbaleſtres, engines to caſt darts, &c
Archangel, *n.* the herb ſo called; a dead nettle, Gloſſ Ur.—In the orig. it is meſange, the bird which we call a titmouſe
Archebiſhop, *n. Sax. Lat.* an archbiſhop
Archedeken, *n. Sax. Lat.* an archdeacon
Archediacre, *n. Fr.* Archdeacon
Archewives, wives of a ſuperior order
Ardure, *n. Fr.* burning
Arede, *v. Sax.* to interpret, *Du.* 289. See Rede
Areiſe, *v. Sax.* to raiſe
Arerage, *n. Fr.* arrear
Areſone, *v. Fr.* arraiſoner, to reaſon with
Areſte, *n. Fr.* arreſt, conſtraint, delay
Areſte, *v. Fr.* to ſtop
Arette, *v Fr.* to impute to
Argoil, *n. Fr.* potters clay
Ariete, *pr. n.* Aries, one of the ſigns in the zodiac
Ariſtotle, *pr. n.* a treatiſe on perſpective under his name is mentioned by Vincent of Beauvais in the 13th century, *Spec. Hiſtor.* l. iii. c. 84, *Extat etiam liber, qui dicitur, Perſpectiva* Ariſtotelis
Arivage, *n. Fr.* as arivaile
Arivaile, *n. Fr.* arrival
Ark, *n. Lat.* a part of the circumference of a circle
Arme, *n.* may perhaps be put for defence, ſecurity
Arm-grete, *adj. Sax.* as thick as a man's arm
Armipotent, *adj. Lat.* mighty in arms
Armles, *adj. Sax.* without an arm
Armorike, *pr. n.* Baſſe Bretagne in France, called anciently Britannia Armorica
Armure, *n. Fr.* armour
Arn, *pl. n.* of am, *v. Sax.* are
Arnolde of the newe town, *pr. n.* of a phyſician and chemiſt of the 13th century. See *Fabric. Bibl. Med. Æt.* in v. *Arnaldus Villanovanus*
Aroume, ſeems to ſignify at large; arowme, or more utter, remote. deprope. ſeorſum. Prompt. Parv. [ceſſively
A'row, in a row, probably from the *Fr.* rue, ſuc-
Arſmetrike, *n. Lat.* arithmetic
Arte, *v. Lat.* to conſtrain
Artelries, *n. pl. Fr.* artillery
As, *adv. Sax.* alſo; *omnino ſic.* As faſt, very faſt; as ſwith, very quickly, immediately [ſay
Aſcaunce, aſkow, aſide, ſideways;—as if, as if to
Aſhen, *n. pl. Sax.* aſhes
Aſlake, *v. Sax.* to ſlacken, to abate
Aſpe, *n. Sax.* a ſort of poplar
Aſpen, *adj.* of an aſp
Aſpie, *v. Fr.* to eſpy
Aſpre, *adj. Fr.* rough, ſharp
Aſpreneſſe, *n.* ſharpneſs
Aſſaut, *n. Fr.* aſſault

Aſſege, *n. Fr.* ſiege
Aſſeth, *n. Fr.* ſufficient, enough
Aſſiſe, *n. Fr* ſituation
Aſſoile, *v. Fr.* to abſolve, to anſwer, aſſoileth, imp. m. 2d perſ. pl.
Aſſomoned, *part. pa.* ſummoned
Aſſure, *v. Fr.* to confide
Aſterte, *v. Sax.* to eſcape, to releaſe; aſterte for aſterted, *part. pa.*
Aſtoned, aſtonied, *part. pa. Fr.* confounded, aſtoniſhed
Aſtrelabre, *n. Fr.* aſtrolabe
Aſtrologien, *n. Fr.* aſtrologer
Aſweved, *part. pa. Sax.* ſtupified, as in a dream
Aſwone, in a ſwoon
At, atte, *prep. Sax.* at after ſouper, as ſoon as ſupper was finiſhed; at day, at break of day; at on, of one mind
Atake, *v. Sax.* to overtake—for ataken, *part. pa.*
A'thre, in three parts
Attamed, *part. pa. Fr. entamé*, opened, begun, taſted, felt, diſgraced
Attempre, *adj. Fr.* temperate
Attemprely, *adv. Fr.* temperately
Attour, *n. Fr.* head-dreſs
Attry, atterly, *adj. Sax.* poiſonous, pernicious
A'twinne, a'two; in two, aſunder
Avale, *v. Fr.* to lower, to let down, to fall down
Avance, *v. Fr.* to advance, to profit
Avant, *n. Fr.* boaſt
Avantage, *n. Fr.* advantage
Avante, *v. Fr.* to boaſt
Avaunt, *adv. Fr.* forward
Auctoritee, *n. Lat.* a text of Scripture or of ſome reſpectable writer
Auctour, *n. Lat.* a writer of credit
Avenaunt, *adj. Fr.* becoming
Aventaile, *n. Fr.* the fore part of the armour *Sk.* the aperture for breathing in a helmet
Aventure, *n. Fr.* adventure
Averrois, *pr. n.* Ebn Roſchd, an Arabian phyſician of the 12th century. See *D'Herbelot* in v. *Roſchd.*
Avicen, *pr. n.* Ebn Sina, an Arabian phyſician of the 10th century. See *D'Herbelot* in v. *Sina*
Aught, *n. Sax.* any thing. It is ſometimes uſed as an adverb; if that the childes mother were aught ſhe, can he ought tell a merry tale or tweie?
Aught, *pa. t.* of owe, as ought
Aught-where, *adv. Sax.* any where
Augrim, a corruption of Algorithm
Augrim ſtones, the pebbles or counters which were anciently uſed in numeration
Avis, *n. Fr.* adviſe
Aviſand, *part. pr.* obſerving
Aviſe, *v. Fr.* to obſerve; aviſeth you, imp. m. 2d perſ. pl.; look to yourſelves, take care of yourſelves
Aviſion, *n. Fr.* viſion
Aumble, *n. Fr.* an ambling pace
Aumener, *n. Fr.* aumoniere, a purſe
Aumere, *n.* aumere of ſilke, bourſe de ſoy, orig. It ſeems to be a corruption of aumener. [ture
Auntre, *v. Fr.* corruption of aventure, to adven-
Auntrous, *adj.* adventurous
Aurora, the title of a Latin metrical verſion of ſeveral parts of the Bible by Petrus de Riga, Calon of Rheims, in the 12th century. Leyſer, in his *Hiſt. Poet. Med. Ævi.* p. 692—736, has given large extracts from this work, and among others the paſſage which Chaucer ſeems to have had in his eye

> Aure Jebal varios ferramenti notat ictus.
> Pondera l'brat in his. Con ſona quæque facit.
> Hoc inventa modo prius eſt ars muſica, quamvis
> Pythagoram dicant hanc docuiſſe prius.

Avouterer, avouter, *n. Fr.* an adulterer
Avouterie, avoutrie, *n.* adultery
Avow, *n. Fr.* vow
Auter, *n. Fr.* altar
Awaite, *n. Fr.* watch
Awaiting, *part. pr.* keeping watch
Awaped, *part. pa. Sax.* confounded, ſtupified
Awayward, *adv. Sax.* away
Awreke, *v. Sax.* to revenge
Axe, *v. Sax.* to aſk
Axing, *n.* requeſt
Ay, *adv. Sax.* ever
Ayel, *n. Fr.* grandfather
Ayen, *adv.* and *prep.* again
Ayenſt, *prep.* againſt
Ayenward, *adv. Sax.* back

B

Ba, *v.* ſeems to be formed from baſſe, *v. Fr.* to kiſs
Bacheler, *n. Fr.* an unmarried man, a knight, one who has taken his firſt degree in an univerſity
Bachelerie, *n. Fr.* knighthood, the bachelerie, the knight
Bade, *pa. t.* of bede
Badder, *comp. d.* of bad, *adj. Sax.* worſe
Bagge, *v.* to ſwell, to diſdain, *Sk.*; rather perhaps to ſquint
Baggingly, *adv.* ſeems to be the tranſlation of *en lorgnoyant*, ſquintingly
Baillie, *n. Fr.* cuſtody, government
Baite, *v. Sax.* to feed, to ſtop to feed
Balance, *n. Fr.* doubt, ſuſpenſe, I dare lay in balance all that I have, I dare wager all that I have
Bale, *n. Sax.* miſchief, ſorrow
Bales, *r. balais, pr. n. Fr.* a ſort of baſtard ruby
Balkes, *n. pl. Sax.* the timbers of the roof
Balled, *adj.* ſmooth as a ball, bald
Bandon, *n. Fr.* See Du Cange in v. Abandons. To her bandon, to her diſpoſal; a ſon bandon, orig.
Bane, *n. Sax.* deſtruction
Barbe, *n.* a hood or muffler which covered the lower part of the face and the ſhoulders. See Du Cange in v. Barbuta
Baren, *pa. t. pl.* of bere, *v. Sax.* bore
Bargaine, *n. Fr.* contention
Bargaret, *n. Fr.* bergerette, a ſort of ſong

Barme, *n. Sax.* the lap
Barme-cloth, an apron
Barre, *n. Fr.* a bar of a door, a ſtripe
Barreine, *adj. Sax.* barren
Baſilicok, *n. a.* a baſiliſk
Baſſe, *n. Fr.* a kiſs
Baſting, *part. pr.* ſewing ſlightly
Batailed, *part. pa. Fr.* embattled
Bathe, for bothe
Bathe, *v. Sax.* we ſhould rather ſay to baſk
Baude, *adj. Fr.* joyous
Bauderie, baudrie, *s.* pimping, keeping a bawdy-houſe
Baudy, *adj.* dirty, with baudy cote, *Lydg. Tra.* b. ix. f. 26. b.
Bayard, *pr. n. Fr.* originally a bay horſe; a horſe in general
Bay-window, a large window, probably ſo called, becauſe it occupied a whole bay, *i. e.* the ſpace between two croſsbeams
Be, *prep. Sax.* by
Be, for been, *part. pa. Sax.*
Beau Semblant, *Fr.* fair appearance
Beau Sire, *Fr.* fair Sir, a mode of addreſs
Bebledde, *part. pa. Sax.* covered with blood
Beblotte, *v. Sax.* to ſtain
Becke, *v. Fr.* to nod
Beclappe, *v. Sax.* to catch
Bedaffed, *part. pa. Sax.* made a fool of. See Daffe
Bede, *v. Sax.* to order, to bid, to offer, to pray; to bede his necke, to offer his neck for execution
Bedote, *v. Sax.* to make to dote, to deceive. See Dote
Dedrede, *adj. Sax.* confined to bed
Bedreinte, *part. pa.* drenched, thoroughly wetted
Been, *n. pl. Sax.* bees
Befill, for befell, *pa. t.* of befall, *v. Sax.*
Beforen, beforne, *adv.* and *prep. Sax.* before
Begiled, *part. pa. Fr.* beguiled
Begon, *part. pa.* of bego, *v. Sax.* gone; wel begon, in a good way; wo begon, far gone in wo; worſe begon, in a worſe way; with gold begon, painted over with gold, *à or paintes*, orig.
Begonne, *part. pa.* of beginne, *v. Sax.* begun
Behalve, *n. Sax.* half, ſide or part
Beheſte, *s. Sax.* to promiſe
Behete, *v. Sax.* to promiſe
Behewe, *part. pa. Sax.* coloured. See Hewe
Behighte, *v. Sax.* promiſe
Behighte, *part. pa.* promiſed
Behighten, *pa. t. pl.* promiſed
Behove, *s. Sax.* behoof, advantage
Bejaped, *part. pa. Sax.* tricked, laughed at
Beknowne, *v. Sax.* to confeſs
Bellamy, *Fr.* good friend
Beleve, *n. Sax.* belief; his beleve, his creed
Belle, *adj. fem. Fr.* fair
Belle, *v. Sax.* to roar
Belle chere, *Fr.* good cheer
Belle Iſaude, F. iii. 7c7, the fair Iſaude, the miſtreſs of Triſtan; ſhe is called Iſoude
Belous, *n. Sax.* bellows
Bemes, *n. pl. Sax.* trumpets
Ben, *inf. m. Sax.* to be, *pr. t. pl.* are, *part. pa.* been

Benched, *part. pa.* furniſhed with benches
Bende, *n. Fr.* a band or horizontal ſtripe
Bending, *s.* ſtriping, making of bands or ſtripes
Bene, *n. Sax.* a bean, and al n'as wurth a bene
Benedicite! *Lat.* an exclamation, anſwering to our bleſs us! it was often pronounced as a triſyllable, Bencite!
Benigne, *adj. Fr.* kind
Benime, *v. Sax.* to take away
Beniſon, *n. Fr.* benediction
Benomen, *part. pa.* of benime, taken away
Bent, *s. Sax.* the bending or declivity of a hill
Berained, *part. pa. Sax.* rained upon
Berde, *s. Sax.* beard; to make any one's berde, to cheat him.
Bere, *n. Sax.* a bear
Bere, *v. Sax.* to bear, to carry; to bere in or on hand, to accuſe falſely, to perſuade falſely; to bere the belle, to carry the prize
Bere, *n. Sax.* a bier, a pillowbear
Bering, *n. Sax.* behaviour
Berme, *n. Sax.* yeſt
Bernard, *pr. n.* L. W. 16. St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux in the 12th century. Our author alludes to a proverbial ſaying concerning him, *Bernardus ipſe non vidit omnia.* See Hoffman in v.
Bernard, *pr. n.* a phyſician of Montpelier in the 13th century
Berne, *n. Sax.* a barm
Beſant, *n. Fr.* a piece of gold, ſo called becauſe firſt coined at Byzantium, now Conſtantinople, *Sk.*
Beſeke, *v. Sax.* to beſeech
Beſet, beſette, *part. pa. Sax.* placed, employed
Beſey, *part. pa.* of beſee, *v. Sax.* beſeen; evil beſey, ill-beſeen, of a bad appearance; richly beſey, of a rich appearance
Beſhet, *part. pa. Sax.* ſhut up.
Beſhrewe, *v. Sax.* to curſe
Beſide, *prep. Sax.* by the ſide of
Beſmotred, *part. pa. Sax.* ſmutted
Beſpet, *part. pa. Sax.* ſpit upon
Beſtadde, beſtad, *part. pa. Sax.* ſituated; it is ſometimes uſed in an ill ſenſe for diſtreſſed
Beſte, *n. Fr.* a beaſt
Beſty, *adj. ſup. Sax.* beſt
Beſy. *adj. Sax.* buſy
Bet, bette, *adv. comp.* for better
Betake, *v. Sax.* to give, to recommend to
Betaught, *pa. t.* recommended to
Bete, *v. Sax.* to prepare, make ready; to bete fires, to make fires—to mend, to heal; to bete nettes, to mend nets; to bete ſorwe, to heal ſorrow
Bete, *v. Fr.* to beat
Beteeche, *v.* as betake
Beth, *imp. m. 2d perſ. pl. Sax.* be ye
Betid, betidde, *pa. t. et part.* of betide, *v. Sax.* happened
Betoke, *pa. t.* of betake, recommended
Betraiſed, *part. pa. Fr.* betrayed; thei have betraiſed thee
Betwix, betwixen, *prep. Sax.* between
Bewepe, *v. Sax.* to weep over
Bewrey, bewrie, *v. Sax.* to diſcover

Beye, *v. Sax.* to buy. See Abeye
Beyete, *part pa Sax* begotten
Bialacoil, *pr. n. Fr.* Bel-accueil, courteous reception
Bibbed, *part pa. Lat.* drunk
Bible, *n. Fr.* any great book
Bicchel bones, uſed in playing a particular kind of game of hazard
Bidde, *v.* as bede
Bie, *v. Sax* to ſuffer. See Abeye
Bigine, *pr. n Fr.* Beguine, a nun of a certain order. See *Du Cange* in v. *Beghina*
Biker, *n Sax.* a quarrel
Bilder, *n. Sax* a builder; the bilder oke, the oak uſed in building
Bill, *n.* a letter
Bimene, *v. Sax.* to bemoan
Bint, for bindeth
Birde for bride, *n. Sax.*——hir chere was ſimple as birde in bour, *i. e.* as bride in chamber—*ſimple ſot comme une eſpouſe*, orig.
Biſmare, *n. Sax* abuſive ſpeech; and bold, and abiding, biſmares to ſuffer
Bit, for biddeth
Bitore, *n. Fr.* a bittern
Bitrent, *part. pa.* twiſted, carried round; perhaps from the *Sax. circundare*
Biwopen, *part. pa.* of bewepe, drowned in tears.
Blancmanger, *n. Fr.* ſeems to have been a very different diſh in the time of Chaucer, from that which is now called by the ſame name. There is a receipt for making it in mſ. Harl. one of the ingredients is the brawne of a capon teaſed ſmall
Blandiſe, *v. Fr.* to flatter
Blanche ſevere. See *Cotgrave* in v. *Fievres blanches*; the agues wherewith maidens that have the greenſickneſs are troubled; and hence *il a les fievres blanches*, either he is in love or ſick of wantonneſs
Ble, *n. Sax.* colour
Blee *pr. n* a foreſt in Kent. *Ur.*
Bleine, *n. Sax.* a puſtule
Blend, *v Sax.* to blind, to deceive
Blend, *pa. t.* of blend
Blent, *pa t* of blenche, *v. Sax.* ſhrinked, ſtarted, aſide
Blered, *part pa. Sax.* in its literal ſenſe is uſed to deſcribe a particular diſorder of the eye, attended with ſoreneſs and dimneſs of ſight; but more commonly, in Chaucer, a man's eye is ſaid to be blered, metaphorically, when he is any way impoſed upon
Bleve, *v. Sax.* to ſtay
Blin, *v Sax.* to ceaſe
Bliſſe, *v Sax.* to bleſs
Blive, bclive, *adv. Sax.* quickly
Bloſme, *n Sax.* bloſſom, *v* to bloſſom
Bloſmy, *adj.* full of bloſſoms
Bob-up-and down, *pr. n.* of a town in the road to Canterbury: it is not marked in the common maps
Bobance, *n. Fr.* boaſting
Boche, *n Fr.* boſſe, a ſwelling, a wen or boil
Bode, boden, *part. pa.* of bede, *v. Sax.* bidden, commanded
Bode, *pa. t.* of bide, *v. Sax*, remained
Bode *n Sax.* a ſtay or delay, an omen
Bodekin, *n. Sax.* a dagger
Boece, *pr. n.* Boethius. His moſt popular work, *De Conſolatione Philoſophiæ*, was tranſlated by Chaucer certainly before 1381, and probably much earlier; the reflections on predeſtination (of which there is no trace in the Filoſtrato) are almoſt entirely taken from Bo. *v. pr.* 3.
Boiſte, *n. Fr* a box
Boiſtous, *adj. ax.* boiſterous, rough,
Boiſtouſly. *adv.* roughly
Bokeler, *n. Fr.* a buckler
Bokeling, *part pr. Fr.* buckling
Boket, *n Sax.* a bucket
Bolas, *n.* bullace, a ſort of plumb or ſloe
Bole armoniac, Armenian earth. *Fr. Gr.*
Bollen, *part pa.* of bodge, *v. Sax.* ſwollen
Bolt, *n. Sax.* an arrow, bolt-upright, ſtraight as an arrow
Bone, *n. Sax.* a boon, petition, he bade hem all a bone, he made a requeſt to them all.
Boras, *n Fr* borax
Bord, *n. Fr.* a border; the ſide of a ſhip; over bord
Borde, *n. Sax.* a table
Bordel, *n. Fr.* a brothel—bordel-women, whores
Bordellers, *n. pl* keepers of bawdyhouſes
Borel, *n. Fr.* bureau, coarſe cloth of a brown colour. See *Du Cange* in v. *Burellus*
Borel, *adj.* made of plain coarſe ſtuff—borel folk, borel men, laymen.
Borwe, *n Sax.* a pledge; hath laid to borwe; hath pledged; have here my feith to borwe; have here my faith for a pledge; Seint John to borwe; St. John being my ſecurity.
Boſard, *n. Fr.* a buzzard, a ſpecies of hawk unfit for ſporting
Boſſe, *n. Fr.* a protuberance
Boſt, *n. Sax* pride, boaſting
Boſt, *adv.* aloud; he cracked boſt
Bote, *n Sax.* remedy, help, profit
Bote, *v. Sax.* to help
Bote, *pa t.* of bite, *v. Sax* bit
Boteles, *adj Sax.* bootleſs, remedileſs
Botel, bottelle, *n. Fr.* bottle
Boterflie, *n. Sax.* a butterfly
Bothe, *adj. Sax.* two together; our bothe labour, the labour of us two together; *noſtrum amborum labor*
Bothe, *conj.* is generally uſed to copulate two members of a ſentence, but ſometimes more.

> And rent adoun bothe wall, and raſter—
> To whom bothe heven, and erthe, and ſee, is ſene.

So the Greeks ſometimes uſed Ἀμφότερον. *Od.* O. 78.
Ἀμφοτέρων κύδος τε καὶ ἀγλαὸν, καὶ σθένος.
Bothum, *n. Fr.* bouton, a bud, particularly of a roſe
Bougeron, *n Fr.* a Sodomite
Boughton-under-blee, *pr. n.* of a town in Kent
Bouke, *n. Sax.* the body
Boulte, *v. Sax.* to ſift, to ſeparate the flour of wheat from the bran

Boun, *adj. Sax.* ready; and bade hem all to be bowne
Bountee, *n. Fr.* goodneſs
Bourde, *n. Fr.* a jeſt,
Bourde, *v. Fr.* to jeſt.
Bourdon, *n. Fr.* a ſtaff,
Boure, *n. Sax.* a houſe, a chamber
Bowe, *n. Sax.* a bow; a dogge for the bowe; a dog uſed in ſhooting.
Boxe, *n.* a blow
Bracer, *n. Fr.* armour for the arm
Bradwardin, *pr. n.* Thomas Bradwardine, Archbiſhop of Canterbury in 1349. His book *De Cauſa Dei*, to which our author alludes, is in print. See *Tanner* in *v. Bradowardinus*
Braide, *n. Sax.* a ſtart
Braide, *v. Sax.* to awake, to ſtart. See Abraide. Out of his wit he braide, he ran out of his ſenſes; to take off
Braket, *n. Brit.* bragod, a ſweet drink made of the wort of ale, honey, and ſpice: it is ſtill in uſe in Wales. Richards in *v.* Bragod
Brafil, *n.* a wood uſed in dying to give a red colour. See Huetiana, p. 268. In the inventory of the effects of Henry V. Rot. Parl. H. VI. m. 20, is the following article, 11 *Graundes peces du Bracile*, pris VIS. VIIID.
Bratt, *n. Sax.* a coarſe mantle
Brech, *n. Sax.* breeches
Brede, *n. Sax.* breadth; in brede, abroad
Breme, *adj. Sax.* furious
Brenne, *v. Sax.* to burn—Brent, *pa. t.* & *part.* burnt
Brenningly, *adv. Sax.* hotly
Breres, *n. pl. Fr.* briars
Breſte, *v. Sax.* to burſt
Bret-ful, *adj.* the ſenſe is much more clear than the etymology.
Bribe, *n. Fr.* properly what is given to a beggar; what is given to an extortioner or cheat,
Briben, *inf. m. Fr.* to beg, or perhaps to ſteal.—See Rot. Parl. 22 E. IV. n. 30, have ſtolen and bribed ſignetts, (cygnets.) And ſo in P. P. 115, b. a bribour ſeems to ſignify a thief, as bribors, pilors, and pikeharneis, are claſſed together; and ſtill more plainly in Lydg. Tra. 152;

> Who ſaveth a theſe whan the rope is knet—
> With ſome ſafe turne the bribour will him quite.

See alſo ancient Scottiſh Poems, p. 171, ſt. vii. l. 3
Briboures. Upon ſecond thoughts I believe that I was wrong in adopting this word from mſ. C. 1, and that we ſhould rather read, with other mſſ.;

> Certaine he knew of briberies mo.

Bridale, *n. Sax.* a marriage feaſt
Briddes, *n. pl. Sax.* birds
Beige, *n. Fr.* contention
Brike, *n. Sax.* breach, ruin
Brimme, *adj.* See Breme
Brocage, *n.* a treaty by a broker or agent
Broche, originally the tongue of a buckle or claſp; and from thence the buckle or claſp itſelf.
Broided, *part. pa. Fr.* braided, woven
Brokking, *part. pr.* throbbing, quavering
Bromeholme, *pr. n.* a priory in Norfolk
Bronde, *n. Fr.* a torch
Broſten, *part. pa.* of breſte
Brotel, *adj. Sax.* brittle
Brotelneſſe, *n.* brittleneſſe
Brotherhed, *n. Sax.* brotherly affection
Bronded, *part. pa. Fr. brodé* embroidered
Brouken, *inf. m. Sax.* to brook, enjoy, uſe
Buckes horne, a buck's horn; to blow the buckes horne is put for any uſeleſs employment.
Buffette, *n. Fr.* a blow
Bugle-horn, *n.* a drinking veſſel made of horn.—Gloſſ. *Ur.* derives it from *bucula cornu*; the gloſſ. to Anc. Scott. Po. explains bowgle to mean a buffalo. I have been told that in ſome parts of the north a bull is now called a boogle.
Bumble, *v. Sax.* to make a humming noiſe; it is uſed to deſcribe the noiſe made by a bittern
Burdoun, *n. Fr. bourdon*, a humming noiſe; the baſs in muſick
Buriels, *n. pl. Sax.* burying places
Burned, *part. pa. Fr.* burniſhed
Burnel the aſſe. The ſtory ſuppoſes that the prieſt's ſon, when he was to be ordained, directed his ſervant to call him at cockcrowing, and that the cock whoſe leg he had formerly broken having overheard this, purpoſely refrained from crowing at his uſual time, by which artifice the young man was ſuffered to ſleep till the ordination was over.
Burnette, *n. Fr. brunette*, cloth dyed of a brown colour. See *Du Cange* in *v. Burnetum.*
Buſk, a buſh
Butte, but, *adv.* & *conj. Sax.* but, ſed—unleſs, *niſi*, I ne'ere but loſt, *non eſſem niſi perdita*—only, which that am but lorne.
But, *prep. Sax.* without, gloſſ. *Ur.* I cannot ſay that I have myſelf obſerved this preposition in Chaucer, but I may have overlooked it. The Saxons uſed it very frequently, and how long the Scottiſh writers have laid it aſide I am doubtful. It occurs repeatedly in Bp. Douglas; but ſpot or fault, p. 3 l. 53; poete but pere, p. 9. l. 19; but and ben, p. 123, l. 40; without and within; *but an and binnan*, originally, I ſuppoſe, *bi utan and bi innan*. By and with are often ſynonymous.
Buxome, *adj. Sax.* obedient, civil
Buxumly, *adv. Sax.* obediently
By, *prep. Sax.* has ſometimes the ſignification of in; by the morwe, in the morning or daytime; by his life, in his lifetime. It is ſometimes uſed adverbially; by and by, near hard by.—By and by, *ſigillatim*, *Prompt. Parv.* theſe were his wordes by and by, *i. e.* ſeverally, diſtinctly; and ſo perhaps this phraſe ſhould be underſtood in the paſſages above quoted.
Byforne. See Beforne
Byleve, *v. Sax.* to ſtay

Byraft, *part. pa.* of byreve, *v. Sax.* bereeved, taken away
Byword, *n. Sax.* a proverb

C.

Cacche, *v.* to catch
Cadence, *n. Fr.* a ſpecies of poetical compoſition
Cairrud, *pr. n.* of a city in Bretagne
Caitif, *n.* & *adj. Fr. chetif*, a wretch, wretched
Calcination, *n. Fr.* a chemical proceſs by which bodies are reduced to a calx
Calculed, *pa. t. Fr.* calculated
Caleweis, probably miſwritten; the original has *la poire du caillonel.* Cotgrave ſays that *caillouët* is the name of a very ſweet pear
Calidone, *pr. n.* it ſhould be Lacedomie
Caliophia, *pr. n.* We ſhould rather read Calypſa, with the two Bodl. mſſ. for Calypſo.
Calle, *n. Fr.* a ſpecies of cap
Camaille, *n Fr.* a camel
Cameline, *n. Fr.* a ſtuff made of camel's hair
Camuſe, *adj. Fr.* flat
Can, *v. Sax.* to know. See Conne
Cananée *adj. Fr.* Cananean
Cane, *pr. n.* Cana in Galilee
Canel, *n. Fr.* canal, channel
Canelle, *n. Fr.* cinnamon
Canevas, *n. Fr.* canvas
Canon, the title of Avicenne's great work. See *D'Herbelot* in v. *Canun*
Cantel, *n. Sax.* a fragment
Capel, *n. Lat.* a horſe
Capitaine, *n. Fr.* a captain
Capitolie, *n. Lat.* the Capitol at Rome
Cappe, *n Lat.* a carp or hood; to ſet a man's cap, to make a fool of him.
Captif, *adj. Fr.* captive
Cardiacle, *n. Fr. Gr.* a pain about the heart
Carectes, *n. pl. Lat. Gr.* characters
Carſe, *pa. t.* of carve, *v. Sax.* cut
Carle, *n. Sax.* a churl, a hardy country fellow
Carmes, *n. pl. Fr* Carmelite friars
Carole, *n. Fr.* a ſort of dance
Carole, *v. Fr.* to dance, in caroling, in dancing
Carpe, *v.* to talk; by carping of tonge, by ſpeech
Carraine, *n. Fr.* a carrion, dead or putrified fleſh
Carrike, *n. Fr.* a large ſhip
Carte, *n. Sax.* a chariot
Carter, *n. Sax.* a charioteer
Cas, *n. Fr. cas*, chance, upon *cas*, by chance
Cas, *n. Fr. caſſe*, a caſe, quiver
Caſſiodore, *pr. n.* Caſſiodorus, a Roman ſenator and conſul, ſeveral of his works are extant. See *Fabric. Bibl. Lat.* and *Bibl. Med. Æt.*
Caſt, *n. Sax.* a contrivance
Caſte, *v.* to throw, to contrive
Caſteloigne, *pr. n.* Catelonia in Spain
Caſuel, *adj. Fr.* accidental
Catapuce, *n. Fr.* a ſpecies of ſpurge
Catel, *n. Fr.* goods, valuable things of all ſorts
Caterwawed. To gon a caterwawed ſeems to ſignify the ſame as to go a caterwawing, or caterwawling, as it has been called by later writers.
Caught, *pa. t.* & *part.* of catch
Cavilatioun, *n. Fr.* cavil
Cecile, Cecilie, *pr. n.* Cecilia
Ceiſe, ceſe, are miſprinted for ſeiſe, *v. Fr.* to ſeize, to lay hold of.
Celerer, *n. Lat. Celerarius*, the officer in a monaſtery who had the care of the proviſions
Celle, *n. Lat.* a religious houſe, it ſeems to be put for a man's head
Celſitude, *n. Fr.* highneſs
Cenſer, *n. Fr.* an incenſe pot
Cenſing, *part. pr. Fr.* fumigating with incenſe
Centaurie, *pr. n.* of an herb
Cercle, *v. Fr.* to ſurround
Cercles, *n. pl. Fr.* circles
Cerial, *adj. Fr.* belonging to the ſpecies of oak called *cerrus*, Lat. *cerra*, Ital. *cerre*
Certain, *adj. Fr.* is uſed ſometimes as a ſubſtantive; of unces a certain, a certain of gold, *i. e.* a certain number of ounces, a certain quantity of gold
Certain, certes, *adv.* certainly
Ceruſe, *n. Fr.* whitelead
Ceſed, *part. pa.* for ſeiſed, is uſed in a legal ſenſe; to that he be ceſed therwith, till that he be poſſeſſed thereof, till he have ſeiſin thereof
Ceſſe, *v. Fr.* to ceaſe
Chace, *v. Fr.* to chaſe, to purſue,
Chafe, *v. Fr.* to grow warm or angry
Chaffare, *n. Sax.* merchandiſe
Chaffare, *v. Sax.* to merchandiſe
Chaire, *n. Fr.* a chair; the chair or pulpit of a profeſſor or preacher.
Chalons, blankets, or coverlets, probably ſo called from being made at Chalons
Chamberere, *n. Fr.* a chambermaid
Champartie, *n. Fr.* a ſhare of land, a partnerſhip in power. Lydgate has the ſame expreſſion, Tra. 139, b. viii. 17.
Clantepleure, *n. Fr.* a ſort of proverbial expreſſion for ſinging and weeping ſucceſſively. See Lydg. Tra. ſtan. the laſt, where he ſays that his book is

Lyke chantepleure, now ſinging now weping.

In mſ. Harl. 4333, is a ballad which turns upon this expreſſion: it begins *Moult vaut mieux pleure chante que ne fait chante pleure*
Chanterie, *n. Fr.* an endowment for the payment of a prieſt to ſing maſs agreeably to the appointment of the founder. There were thirty-five of theſe chanteries eſtabliſhed at St. Paul's, which were ſerved by fifty-four prieſts, Dugd. Hiſt. pref. p. 41.
Chapman, *n. Sax.* a merchant or trader
Chapmanbede, *n. Sax.* the condition of a chapman or tradeſman
Char. *n. Fr.* a chariot
Charboucle, *n. Fr.* a carbuncle
Charge, *n. Fr.* a load, burthen, buſineſs of weight; it n'ere no charge; it were no harm: of which there is no charge, from which there is no conſequence to be expected; of that no charge, no matter for that
Charge, *v. Fr.* to weigh, to incline on account of

weight—which chargeth not to ſay, which it is of no importance to ſay

Chargeant, *part. pr.* burthenſome

Charmereſſe, *n. Fr.* an enchantreſs

Chaſtelaine, *n. Fr.* the wife of a chaſtelain or lord of a caſtle

Chaſtie, *v. Fr.* to chaſtiſe

Chaunteclere, *pr. n.* of a cock

Checkere, *n. Fr.* a cheſsboard

Chees, *pa. t.* of cheſe, *v. Sax.* choſe

Cheſſis, we ſhould read cheſes. The orig. has fromages

Cheke, a term at cheſs, to give notice to the oppoſite party that his king, if not removed or guarded by the interpoſition of ſome other piece, will be made priſoner: it is derived originally from the Perſian *ſhâh*, *i. e.* king, and means, take care of your king. See Hyde, Hiſt. Shahilud, p. 3, 4.

Chekelatoun, a robe of ſtate

Chekemate, or ſimply mate, is a term uſed at cheſs when the king is actually made priſoner, and the game conſequently finiſhed. The Perſian phraſe is *ſhâh mât*, *i. e.* the king is conquered. See Hyde, Hiſt. Shahilud, p. 152

Chelaundre, *n. Fr.* a goldfinch

Chepe, *v. Sax.* to cheapen, to buy

Chepe, *n.* cheapneſs

Chepe, *pr. n.* Cheapſide in London

Cherche, *n. Sax.* a church

Chere, *n. Fr.* countenance, appearance, entertainment, good cheer

Cherice, *v. Fr.* to cheriſh

Cheriſance, *n. Fr.* comfort

Cherl, *n. Sax.* a man of mean birth and condition

Cherifk, *adj.* illiberal

Ches, *n. Fr.* the game of cheſs

Cheſe, *v. Sax.* to chooſe

Cheſe, for cheſeth

Cheſte, *n. Lat.* a coffin

Cheſte, *n.* debate

Cheſteine, *n. Fr.* the cheſnut tree, the cheſnut fruit

Chevachie, *n. Fr.* an expedition

Chevalrie, *n. Fr.* knighthood, the manners, exerciſes, and valiant exploits, of a knight

Chevalrous, *adj.* valiant

Cheve, *v. Fr.* to come to an agreement or concluſion; yvel mote he cheve, ill may he end

Cheveſaile, *n. Fr.* a necklace

Chevetain, *n. Fr.* chieftain

Cheviſance, *n. Fr.* an agreement for borrowing of money

Chiche, *adj. Fr.* niggardly, ſparing

Chidereſſe, *n. Sax.* a female ſcold

Chideſter, *n. Sax.* a female ſcold

Chiertee, *n. Fr.* tenderneſs, affection

Chike, *n. Sax.* a chicken

Chimbe, *n. Sax.* the prominent part of the ſtaves beyond the head of a barrel

Chimbe, *v.* to ſound in conſonance like bells

Chimeny, *n. Fr.* a chimney

Chinche, *adj.* as chiche

Chincherie, *n.* niggardlineſs

Chirche, *n. Sax*, a church

Chirchereve, *n. Sax.* a churchwarden

Chirchhawe, *n. Sax.* a churchyard

Chirk, *v. Sax.* to chirp as a ſparrow

Chirking, *n.* a diſagreeable ſound

Chit, for chideth

Chivachee, *n.* as chevachie

Chiver, *v. Sax.* to ſhiver

Cierges, *n. pl. Fr.* wax tapers

Cipioun, *pr. n.* Scipio

Cipris, *pr. n.* Venus

Circes, *pr. n.* for Circe

Citee, *n. Fr.* a city

Citole, *n. Fr.* a muſical inſtrument. Sir John Hawkins, in his very curious Hiſt. of Muſick, v. ii. p. 106, n. ſuppoſes it to have been a ſort of dulcimer, and that the name is a corruption of the *Lat. ciſtella*. Beſide the paſſage which he has quoted from Gower, Conf. Am. 178, it is mentioned again in fol. 189, among the inſtruments which ſowned lowe. See alſo *Du Cange* in v. *Citola*, and *M. de la Ravaliere*, *Poeſies du Roy de Navarre*, t. i. p. 248

Citrin, *adj. Fr.* of a pale yellow or citron colour

Citrination, *n.* a chymical term. *Arnoldus in Roſario*, mſ. l. i c 5; "*Citrinacio* nihil aliud eſt "quam completa albedinis digeſtio, nec albedo "eſt aliud quam nigredinis ablatio." Gloſſ. Carpent. in v.

Clamben, *pa. t. pl.* of climb, *v. Sax.*

Clapers, *n. pl. Fr.* rabbit-burrows,

Clappe, *v. Sax.* to knock repeatedly, to talk faſt

Clapping, *n.* noiſy talking

Clapſed, claſped

Clarré, *n. Fr.* wine mixed with honey and ſpices, and afterwards ſtrained till it is clear; it was otherwiſe called piment, as appears from the title of the following receipt in the *Medulla Cirurgiæ Rolandi*, mſſ. Bodl. 761, fol. 86; "Cla- "retum bonum, ſive pigmentum.—Accipe nu- "cem moſchatam, cariofilos, gingebas, macis, "cinamomum, galangum; quæ omnia in pul- "verem redacta diſtempera cum bono cum "tertiâ parte mellis; poſt cola per ſacculum, "et da ad bibendum. Et nota, quod illiud "item poteſt fieri de cereviſiâ."

Clatternden, *pa. t. pl.* of clatter, *v. Sax.*

Clanſe, *n. Fr.* an end or concluſion

Claw, *v. Sax.* to ſtroke, he clawed him on the back, he ſtroked him on the back to encourage him; to claw on the gall, ſignifies the ſame as to rub on a ſore place

Cled, for clad

Cleneſſe, *n. Sax.* purity

Clepe, *v. Sax.* to call, to name

Clergie, *n. Fr.* the clerical profeſſion

Clergial, *adj.* learned

Clergion, *n.* a young clerk

Clerk, *n. Fr.* a perſon in holy orders, a man of learning, a ſtudent at the univerſity

Cleves, *n. pl. Sax.* rocks. See Cliffe

Cliffe, *n. Sax.* a rock

Clifte, *n. Sax.* a cleft

Cliket, *n. Fr.* a key

Cinke, *v. Fr.* to ring, *neut.* to tinkle

C ippe, *v. Sax.* to cut hair, to embrace
Clipſy, *adj.* as if eclipſed
Clobbed, *adj. Sax.* like a club
Cloiſtre, *n. Fr.* a cloiſter, an encloſure
Clomben, *pa. t pl.* of climb, *v. Sax.*
Cloſer, *n. Fr* an encloſure
Clote-lefe, a leaf of the burdock, or clotebur
Clotered, *part pa Sax.* clotted
Cloue-gilofre, *Fr.* a clove-tree or the fruit of it
Cloutes, *n. pl. Sax.* ſmall pieces
Clum. This word ſeems to be formed from the *Sax. v.* cluraian, *muſſitare murmurare*, to expreſs the mumbling noiſe which is made by a congregation in accompanying prayers which they cannot perfectly repeat
Coagulat, *part. pa. Lat.* curdled
Cokes bones, a corruption of a familiar oath
Cod, *n. Sax.* a bag
Cofre, *n. Fr.* a cheſt
Cogge, *n. Sax.* a cockboat. See *Du Cange* in *v. Cogo*
Coilons, *n. pl Fr* teſticles
Coine, *n. Fr.* a piece of money, a quince
Coint. *adj. Fr.* neat, trim
Coke, *n. Lat.* a cook
Cokeney, *n.* a cook
Cokewold, *n.* a cuckold. How this word has been formed is difficult to ſay, but probably it has ſome relation to the *Fr. cocu.* In the beſt mſſ. of The Canterbury Tales, it is conſtantly ſpelled as above, and is always, I believe, to be pronounced as a triſyllable. The author of The Remedy of Love, ver. 288, *ſeq.* pretends that the true orthography of this word is cockold, according to a moſt abſurd etymology which he has there given of it; an additional proof (if any were wanted) that The Remedie of Love was not written by Chaucer
Col, *n. n.* a common name for a dog
Cold, *v. Sax.* to grow cold
Coler, *n. Fr.* a collar
Colered, *part. pa.* collared, wearing collars
Collation, *n. Fr.* a conference
Collinges, *n. pl. Fr.* embraces round the neck
Coltiſh, *adj. Sax.* playful as a colt
Columbine, *adj. Lat.* belonging to a dove, dove-like
Combre-world, *n.* an incumbrance to the world
Combuſt, *adj Lat.* burnt, a term in aſtrology when a planet is not more than 8° 30′ diſtant from the ſun.
Come, for cometh
Commenſal, *n. Fr.* a companion at table
Commune, *n. Fr.* commonalty
Communes, *n. pl* commoners, common people
Compaignable, *adj. Fr.* ſociable
Compame, for compagne
Compas, *n. Fr.* a compaſs a circle; the Trine compas, the Trinity; an appellation borrowed, as it ſeems, from the common emblem of that myſtery, a circle circumſcribing a triangle—contrivance
Compaſment, *n.* } contrivance
Compaſſing, *n.* }
Compaſs, *v.* to contrive, he compaſſed his thoughts, he contrived in his thought
Compenable, *adj.* as compaignable
Compere, *n. Fr.* a goſſip, a near friend
Complin, *n. Fr.* complie, evenſong, the laſt ſervice of the day, ſinging in general
Compowned, *part. pa* compoſed, put together
Compte, *n. Fr.* account
Concete, *n. Fr.* conception, apprehenſion
Condeſcende, *v. Fr.* to yield
Condiſe, *n. pl. Fr.* conduits
Confecture, *n. Fr.* compoſition
Confuſe, *adj. Fr.* confounded, he became ſo confuſe, he conneth not loke
Conjecte, *v. Fr.* to project
Coniſaunce, *n. Fr.* underſtanding
Conjure, *v. Fr.* to adjure
Conne, *v. Sax.* to know, to be able; I ſhal not conne anſwere; I ſhall not know how—or be able, to anſwer; thou ſhalt never—Con, knowen, thou ſhalt be never able to know—to conne thank, to be pleaſed or obliged, *ſçavoir gre, Fr.* to conne maugre, to be diſpleaſed, *ſçavoir mal gré, orig.*
Conſeil, *n. Fr.* counſel
Conſentant, *part pr. Fr.* conſentant of this curſedneſſe, conſenting to *t. c.*
Conſerve, *v. Fr.* to preſerve
Conſiſtory, *n. Fr.* ſignifies uſually an eccleſiaſtical court, pontus, any court of juſtice
Conſtablerie, *n. Fr.* a ward or diviſion of a caſtle under the care of a conſtable. *Du Cange* in *v. Conſtabularius caſtri*
Conteke, *n. Sax.* contention
Contenance *n. Fr.* appearance, pretence
Contract, *part. pa. Lat* contracted
Contrariauntes, *part. pr.* is uſed in the plural number, according to the French cuſtom, oppoſing, contradicting
Contrarie, *v. Fr.* to contradict
Contrarious, *adj. Fr.* oppoſite, perverſe
Contrary, *n. Fr.* adverſary
Contrefete, *v. Fr.* to counterfeit, imitate
Controve, *v. Fr.* to invent
Contubernial, *adj. Lat.* familiar
Contune, for continue. This is one of thoſe licences, for the ſake of rhyme, which univerſal cuſtom can alone juſtify. Our Author ſeems to have been aſhamed of it, as I do not recollect to have met with it in The Canterbury Tales. Lydgate has been leſs ſcrupulous. See Trag. 2. b. 14. b. 24. b.
Cope, *n. Fr.* cape, a cloak
Coppe, *n. Sax.* the top of any thing
Corage, *n. Fr.* heart, inclination, ſpirit, courage
Corbettes, *n pl. Fr.* niches for ſtatues
Cordeth, for accordeth
Cordewane, *n. Fr.* cordouan, Spaniſh leather ſo called from Corduba
Cordileres, *n. pl. Fr.* Cordeliers, an order of friars ſo called from their wearing a cord inſtead of a girdle
Corinne, *pr. n.* [girdle
Cornewaile, *pr. n.* Cornouaille in Bretagne
Corniculere, *n. Lat* an officer in the Roman government. See *Pitiſc. Lex. Ant. Rom.* in *v. Cornicularius*

Cornmuſe, *n. Fr.* a bagpipe
Corny, *adj. Sax* ſtrong of the corn or malt
Coroune, *n. Fr.* a crown or garland
Corps, *n. Fr* body
Corpus, *n. Lat.* body, *corpus Domini*, God's body; *corpus Madrian*
Corrige, *v. Fr.* to correct
Corrumpable, *adj. Fr.* corruptible
Corrumpe, *v. Fr.* to corrupt
Corſe, *v. ax.* to curſe
Corſeint, *n. Fr.* a holy body, a ſaint, the corſaynt and the kirke
Corven, *part. pa.* of carve, *v. Sax* cut
Coſin, *n. Fr.* a couſin or kinſman: it is ſometimes uſed adjectively, allied, related
Coſinage, *n Fr.* kindred
Coſtage, *n. Fr.* coſt, expence
Coſteie, *v. Fr.* to go by the coaſt
Coſtlewe, *adj.* coſtly
Coſtrell, *n.* a drinking veſſel. See *Du Cange*, in v. *Caſtrellus*
Cote, *n. Sax.* a cottage
Cote, *n. Fr.* a coat, cote-armure, a coat worn over armour, upon which the armorial enſigns of the wearer were uſually embroidered
Cotidien, *n. Fr.* daily; it is uſed as a ſubſtantive for a *quotidian* ague
Couche, *v Fr.* to lay
Couched, *part pa.* laid, couched with perles, laid or trimmed with pearls
Coud, coude, *pa. t.* of conne, knew, was able
Coveite, *v. Fr.* to covet
Covenable, *adj. Fr.* convenient, ſuitable
Coverchiefs, *n. pl. Fr.* headclothes
Covercle, *n. Fr.* a potlid
Covert, *adj. Fr.* ſecret, covered
Covine, *n. Fr.* ſecret contrivances
Coulpe, *n. Fr.* a fault
Count, *v. Fr.* to account, to eſteem
Counterpeiſe, *n. Fr.* a counterpoiſe, a weight which balances another
Counterpeiſe, *v. Fr.* to counterpoiſe
Counterplete, *v. Fr.* to plead againſt
Counterwaite, *v. Fr.* to watch againſt
Countour, *n. Fr. comptoir*, a countinghouſe *compteur*, an arithmetician, *Du.* 435.
Countretaille, *n. Fr.* a tally anſwering exactly to another, hence Echo is ſaid to anſwer at the countretaille
Coure, *v. Fr.* to ſit crouching like a brooding hen
Courtepy, a ſhort cloke of coarſe cloth
Court-man, a courtier, *homme de cour, Fr.*
Couth, couthe, *pa. t.* of conne, knew, was able *part pa.* known
Cowardiſe, *n. Fr.* want of courage. As to the etymology of the adj. from which this word has been formed, I think the opinion of Twyſden and Somner [*Gloſſ. ad X. Script.* v. *Friduuite*] much the moſt probable, who derive it from the barb. Lat. *culum vertere*, to turn tail, to run away. See *Du Cange* in v. *Culverta* and *Culvertagium*, who rejects the opinion above mentioned, but without ſuggeſting any thing ſo plauſible. Culvert (as it is written in the oldeſt and beſt French mſſ. that I have ſeen) might eaſily be corrupted, according to the French mode of pronunciation, into *couart* and *couard*—I have ſomewhere ſeen the French language ſeriouſly charged with indelicacy for its frequent and wanton uſe of the word *cul* in compoſition; nor can the charge be ſaid to be groundleſs. Beſide the numerous inſtances which will occur to every body, I ſuſpect that this monoſyllable makes part of a common and ſolemn term in our law, imported originally from France *Culpriſt* ſeems to have been a vulgar name for a priſoner, a perſon taken by that part which is moſt expoſed in running away. Holinſhed has expreſſed the ſame idea more delicately, vol. iii. p 842; "The "prentiſes were caught by the backs, and had "to priſon" And ſo it is expreſſed in Ancient Scottiſh Poems, p. 182, ver. 15—Yet Deid [Death] ſal tak him be the bak
Coye, *v. Fr.* to quiet, to ſoothe
Craftesman, *n. Sax.* a man of ſkill
Crake, *v. Fr* to crack [ing
Crake, crakel, *v. Sax.* to quaver hoarſely in ſing-
Crampiſh, *v. Fr.* to contract violently, as the cramp does, *An.* 170.
Cratching, *n. Sax.* ſcratching
Craſed, *part. pa. Fr. craſé* broken
Creance, *n. Fr* faith, belief
Creance, *v. Fr.* to borrow money
Create, *part pa. Lat* crincled, circularly formed, perhaps from the iſland, *kringe, cirino, gyro*
Crepil *n. Sax.* a cripple
Crevaſſe, *n Fr.* a chink or crevice
Criande, *part. pr.* of crie, *n. Fr.* crying
Crips, F. iii. as criſpe
Criſſippus, *pr. n.* I find the title of a work in Montfaucon, *Bibl. Bibl.* p. 513 to which Chaucer may poſſibly allude; *Chryſippi, diſcipuli Euthymii, in Joannem encomium*—and again, p 1314. *Chryſippi Preſbyteri laudatio, S. Joannis Baptiſtæ.* It is not unlikely that a panygeriſt on the Baptiſt might be led by his rage againſt Herodias to ſay ſome harſh things of women in general
Criſpe, *adj. Lat.* curled
Croce, *n. Sax.* a croſs
Crois, *n. Fr.* a croſs
Cromes, *n. pl. Sax* crumbs
Crommed, *part. pa. Sax.* ſtuffed, crammed [Killian
Crone, *n. Sax.* an old woman; *kronie, ovis vetula.*
Crope, cropen, *part. pa.* of crepe, *v. Sax.* crept
Croppes, *n. pl. Sax.* the extremities of the ſhoots of vegetables; now in the crop, now at the top; croppe and rote, root and branch; the whole of a thing
Croſſelet, *n. Fr.* a crucible
Crouche, *v. Sax.* to ſign with the croſs,
Croude, *v. Sax.* to ſhove together
Crouke, *n. Sax.* an earthen pitcher
Croun, *n. Fr.* ſignifies head
Croupe, *n. Fr.* the ridge of the back
Crowes feet, the wrinkles which ſpread from the outer corner of the eyes: Spenſer deſcribes this mark of old age in the ſame manner, ecl. 12;

And by mine eie the crow his claw doth wright.

Crowned, *part. pa.* wearing a crown; crowned malice, ſovereign malice.
Crull, *adj. Sax.* curled
Cucurbite, *n. Lat.* a gourd, a veſſel ſhaped like a gourd, uſed in diſtillation
Culpons, *n. pl. Fr.* ſhreds, logs
Culver, *n. Sax.* a dove
Cuppe, *n. Fr.* a cup; withouten cuppe he drank all his penance, he took large draughts of grief; he made no uſe of a cup, but drank out of the pot
Curacion, *n. Fr.* cure, healing
Cure, *n Fr.* care; I do no cure, I take no care
Curfew-time, according to the Conqueror's edict, is ſaid to have been 8 h. p m. Walſingham, ſpeaking of an event on the 2d of September 1311, mentions 9 h. as the *hora ignitegii*. It probably varied with the ſeaſons of the year
Curious, *adj. Fr.* careful
Curteis, *adj. Fr.* courteous
Cuſtomer, *adj. Fr.* accuſtomed

D.

Daffe, *n. Sax.* a fool; thou doteſt, daffe, quod ſhe, dull are thy wittes
Dagge, *n.* a ſlip or ſhred, pierce plough, 6. b.
Dagged, *part. pa.* cut into ſlips
Dagging, *n.* ſlitting, cutting into ſlips
Dagon, *n* a ſlip or piece
Damaſcene, *pr. n.* the country about Damaſcus
Damaſcene, *pr. n.* Joannes Meſue Damaſcenus, an Arabian phyſician in the 8th and 9th century. See *Fabric. Bibl. Gr.* t. xiii. p. 256.
Dame, *n. Fr. Lat. domina*, miſtreſs, lady, mother
Dampne, *v. Fr.* to condemn
Dan. *n. Fr. Lat dominus*, lord, was a title commonly given to monks. It is alſo prefixed by Chaucer to the names of other perſons of all ſorts; Dan Arcite, Dan Burrnell, Dan Caton
Dance, *n. Fr.* the old dance, the old game. The French have the ſame phraſe, *elle ſcait aſſez de la vieille Danſe.* Colgrave
Danger, *n. Fr.* a dangerous ſituation: in danger, coyneſs, ſparingneſs, with danger, ſparingly.
Dangerous, *adj* difficult, ſparingly
Dante, *pr. n.* See Gloſſ. in v. Lavender.
Dapple-gray, the colour which is called in Fr. *pommelé*
Dare, *v. Sax.* to ſtare
Dares, *pr. n* of a ſuppoſed hiſtorian of the Trojan war, *Du* 1070
Darreine, *v. Fr.* deſrener, *Lat.* derationare, to conteſt
Dart, *n. Sax.* a ſpear or javelin; the dart is ſette up for virginitee. There is an alluſion to the ſame cuſtom in *Lydg. Tra.* 26;

> And oft it happeneth he that hath beſt ron
> Doth not the ſpere like his deſert poſſede.

Daſen, *pr. t. pl* of daſe, *v. Sax.* grow dim-ſighted
Daunt, *v. Fr.* to conquer, that ne with love may daunted be, orig. *qui par amours ne ſoit domptez*
Dawe, *v. Sax.* to dawn
Dawnening, *n. Sax.* daybreak
Dawes, *n. pl.* for daves
Daye, *n. Sax.* day, time, at my day, at the day appointed to me; to graunt him dayes of the remenant, to permit him to pay the remainder at certain days by inſtalments
Deaurat, *part. pa Lat.* gilded
Debate, *v. Fr.* to fight
Debonaire, *adj. Fr.* courteous, gentle
Decoped, *part pa. Fr.* cut down
Decorate, *pr. n.* Decoratus
Dede, *v. Sax.* to grow dead; *part. pa.* dead
Dedly, *adj. Sax* devoted to death
Deduit, *n. Fr.* pleaſure
Defait, defaited, *part. pa. Fr.* waſted
Defame, *n. Fr.* infamy
Defame, *v. Fr.* to make infamous
Defaute, *n. Fr.* want defautes, *pl.* defects
Defende, *v. Fr.* to forbid, to ranſom
Defence, *n. Fr.* prohibition
Definiſhe, *v. Fr.* to define, to make a definition of,
Degree, *n. Fr.* a ſtair, or ſet of ſteps, rank in life
Deiden, *pa. t. pl* of deye, *v Sax.* died
Deine, for deien, *inf. m* of deye, *v. Sax.* to die
Deinous, *adj. Fr.* diſdainful
Deintee, *n Fr.* value, a thing of value; hath deintee, values highly; told no deintee of, ſet no value upon; it was deintee, it was a valuable thing
Deinteous, *adj* choice, valuable
Deis, *n. Fr.* a wooden floor
Del, *n. Sax.* a part; never a del, not a bit; every del, every part
Dele, *v. Sax.* to divide
Delibere, *v. Fr.* to deliberate
Delicacie, *n. Fr.* pleaſure
Delices, *n. pl. Fr.* delights
Delie, *adj. Fr.* delié, thin, ſlender
Delit, *n. Fr.* delight
Delitable, *adj. Fr.* deleſtable
Deliver, *adj. Fr.* nimble, *Conf. Am.* 177, b.
Deliverly, *adv.* quickly
Deliverneſs, *n. Fr.* agility
Delve, *v. Sax.* to dig
Delavy, *n. Lat.* deluge
Demaine, *v. Fr.* to manage
Demaine, *n. Fr.* management
Deme, *v. Sax.* to judge
Demoniak, *n. Fr.* one poſſeſt by a devil
Dent, *n. Sax.* a ſtroke. See Dint
Denwere, *n.* doubt, *St.* This interpretation ſuits well enough with the only paſſage in which I have found this word; but I ſhould be glad to ſee ſome other inſtance of the uſe of it.
De par dieux jeo aſſente, in God's name I agree.
Depart, *v. Fr.* to part, to diſtribute
Depeint, *part. pa. Fr.* painted
Dequace, *v.* to ſhake down, q?
Dere, *v. Sax.* to hurt
Dere, *adj. Sax.* dear
Dereling, *n. Sax.* darling
Dereworth, *adj. Sax.* precious, valued at a high rate

Derne, *adj. Sax.* ſecret
Derre, *comp.* of dere
Des, F. iii. 270, as deis
Deſcenſorie, *n. Fr.* a veſſel uſed in chemiſtry for the extraction of oils *per deſcenſum*
Deſcriven, *inf. m. Fr.* to deſcribe
Deſirous, *adj. Fr.* eager
Deſolat, *part. pa. Lat.* abandoned, diſtreſſed
Deſpite, *n. Fr.* malicious anger
Deſpitous, *adj.* angry to exceſs
Deſpitouſly, *adv.* angrily
Deſpoile, *v. Fr.* to undreſs
Deſtreine, *v Fr.* to vex, to conſtrain
Deſtrer, *n. Fr.* a war horſe, *Lat* dextrarius
Deſtrie, deſtruie, *v. Fr.* to deſtroy
Determinat, *part. pa. Lat.* fixed, determined
Detteles, *adj.* free from debt
Deve, *adj. Sax.* deaf
Devining, *n. Fr.* divination
Deviſe, *n. Fr.* direction
Deviſe, *v. Fr.* to direct, to order, to relate; at point deviſe; a point deviſé, *Fr.* with the greateſt exactneſs
Devoir, *n Fr.* duty; wele thei ſtode and did ther devere
Dey, *n.* probably originally meant a day-labourer in general, though it may ſince have been uſed to denote particularly a ſuperintendent of a dayerie. See *Du Cange*, in v. *Daeria*, *Dayeria*, *Dagaſcalci*
Deye, *v. Sax.* to dye
Deyer, *n. Sax.* a dyer
Diapred, *part. pa. Fr.* diverſified with flouriſhes, &c.
Diche, *v. Sax.* to dig, to ſurround with a ditch
Dide, for died
Dide *pa. t.* of *do*, *v. Sax.* diden, *pa. t. pl.*
Die, *v. Sax.* to tinge
Diete, *n. Fr.* daily food
Diffame, *n. Fr.* bad reputation. See Defame
Digeſtible, *adj Lat.* eaſy to be digeſted
Digeſtives, *n. pl. Fr* things to help digeſtion
Dight, *v. Sax.* to diſpoſe, to dreſs
Digne, *adj. Fr.* worthy, proud, diſdainful
Dike, *v. Sax.* to dig, to make ditches
Dilatation, *n. Fr.* enlargement
Dint, *n. Sax.* as dent; thonder-dint, a ſtroke of [thunder
Dioſcorides, *pr. n.* of a Greek writer on plants, whoſe work is extant
Diſarray, *n. Fr* diſorder
Diſavaunce, *v. Fr* to drive back
Diſaventure, *n. Fr.* misfortune
Diſblame, *v. Fr.* to clear from blame
Diſcomfiture, *n. Fr.* defeat
Diſcomfort, *n. Fr.* diſpleaſure
Diſcomforten, *v. Fr.* to diſcourage
Diſcoverte, *adj. Fr.* at diſcoverte, uncovered; a deſcouvert
Diſdeinous, *adj. Fr.* diſdainful
Diſencreſe, *n. Fr.* diminution
Diſencreſe, *v. neut. Fr.* to decreaſe
Diſfigure, *n. Fr.* deformity
Diſherited, *part. pa. Fr.* diſinherited, ſtripped of poſſeſſions
Diſhevele, *part. pa. Fr.* with hair hanging looſe, *deſchevelé*
Diſjoint, *n. Fr.* a difficult ſituation
Diſobeiſant, *part. pr. Fr.* diſobedient
Diſordeined, *part. pa. Fr.* diſorderly
Diſordinate, *adj. Lat.* diſorderly
Diſordinaunce. *n. Fr* irregularity
Diſparage, *n. Fr.* a diſparagement
Diſpence, *n. Fr* expenſe
Diſperance, *n. Fr.* deſpair
Diſpitous, *adj.* angry to exceſs. See Deſpitous
Diſpleſance, *n. Fr.* diſpleaſure
Diſpone, *v. Lat* to diſpoſe
Diſport, *n. Fr.* deport, ſport, diverſion
Diſport, *v.* to divert
Diſpreiſing, *part pa. Fr.* undervaluing
Diſputiſon, *n. Fr.* diſpute; the clergie of the ſouth made a diſputeſoun
Diſtrulily, *adv.* irregularly
Diſſimule, *v. Fr.* to diſſemble
Diſſimulinge, *n. pl. Fr.* diſſemblings
Diſſoned, *part. pa. Fr.* diſſonant
Diſtaine, *v. Fr.* to diſcolour, to take away the colour
Diſtinct, *v Lat.* to diſtinguiſh
Diſtingued, *part. pa Fr* diſtinguiſhed
Diſtourbled, *p. t. Fr* diſturbed
Diſtreyne, *v. Fr.* to conſtrain. See Deſtreine
Diſtrouble, *v. Fr.* to diſturb
Diſturne, *v. Fr.* to turn aſide
Dite, *v Fr* to dictate, to write
Dites, *n. pl Fr.* ſayings, ditties
Ditus, *pr. n.* Dictys Cretenſis
Diverſe, *adj. Fr.* different
Diverſe, *v.* to diverſify
Divine, *n.* for divinity
Diviniſtre, *n Fr.* a divine
Do, *v.* do, for don, *part. p.*
Doand, *part. pr.* doing
Dogerel, *adj.* derived, I ſuppoſe, from dog, ſo that rime-dogerel may be underſtood to mean what in French may be called *rime de chien*. See *Cotgrave* in v *Chien*; *choſe de chien*, a paltry thing, a trifle, traſh, trumpery
Dogge for the bowe, a dog uſed in ſhooting
Doke, *n. Sax.* a duck
Dole, *n Sax.* as del
Dole, *n. Fr* grief, mourning
Dolven, *part. pa.* of delve, *v. Sax.* buried
Dombe, *adj. Sax.* dumb
Dome. *n. Sax.* judgment, opinion
Domeſman, *n. Sax.* a judge
Donet. *n.* a grammar, the elements of any art, from Ælius Donatus, a Roman grammarian, whoſe Introduction to the Latin language [*inter Gramm. Vet. Putſch.* p. 1735.] was commonly read in ſchools; then drave I me among drapers my donet to lerne, *Pierce Plough*, 23. b.
Donmow, *pr. n.* See *Pierce Plough*, 44. b.
Donne, don, *adj. Sax.* of a brown or dun colour
Dormant, *part. pr. Fr.* fixed, ready—*Les vaiſſeaux qui là dormoient l' ancre*, *Froiſſart*, v. iii. c. 52
Dortour. *n. Fr.* a dormitory, or common ſleeping-room
Doſein, *n. Fr.* a dozen
Deſſer, *n. Fr.* a baſket to be carried on the back

Dete, *v. Sax.* to be fooliſh through age or otherwiſe

Doth, *imp. m. 3d per. pl.* of do, do ye

Douced, may perhaps be a corruption of doucete, which is the name of a muſical inſtrument in a poem of Lydgate's, mſ. Bodl. Fairf. 16.

Ther were trumpes and trumpetes,
Lowde ſhallys and doucetes.

Doughtren, *n. pl. Sax.* daughters

Doutance, *n. Fr.* doubt

Doute, *v. Fr.* to fear

Doutelees, douteles, *adv.* without doubt

Doutous, *adj.* doubtful

D'outre mere, *Fr.* from beyond ſea, *Du.* 258.

Dowaire, *n. Fr.* dower

Dradde, drad, *p. t.* & *part.* of drede, *v. Sax.* feared

Draf, *n. Sax.* things thrown away as unfit for man's food

Draf-ſack, a ſack full of draff

Draſty, *adj Sax.* of no more value than draff

Dragges, *n pl. Fr.* drugs

Drede, *n. Sax* fear, doubt; withouten drede, without doubt; out of drede, out of doubt

Drede, *v. Sax.* to fear, dred, *pa. t.* for drad

Dredeful, *adj.* timorous

Dredeles, *adv.* without doubt

Dreint, *pa. t.* & *part.* of drenche, drowned

Drenche, *v. Sax.* to drown

Drenche, *v. neut Sax.* to be drowned

Drerineſſe, *n. Sax* ſorrow

Drery, *adj. Sax* ſorrowful

Dreſſe, *v. Fr.* to addreſs, apply

Dretche, *v. act. Sax.* to vex, to trouble

Dretched, *part. pa.* oppreſſed, troubled, *Conf. Am.* 79

Dretche, *v neut. Sax.* to delay, *Conf. Am.* 178

Dretching, *n* delay

Drie, *v. Sax* to ſuffer

Driſe, *v. Sax.* to drive

Drinkeles, *adj. Sax.* without drink

Dronkelew, *adj. Sax.* given to drink, *Pierce Plough* 41

Dronken, *part. pa.* of drink, *v. Sax.* drunk

Drough, *pa t.* of draw, *v. Sax.* drew

Drovy, *adj. Sax.* dirty

Druerie, *n. Fr.* courtſhip, gallantry, a miſtreſs. See *Du Cange* in v. *Druderia.*—The reader may perhaps be not diſpleaſed to ſee the following deſcription of a drut or lover, by Guillem Aeſmar, a Provencal poet, mſ. Croſts, fol. 219.

Ben paoc ama drut, qi non es gelos,
Et paoc ama, qi non eſt airos,
Et paoc ama, qi non es ſolettis,
Et paoc ama, qi non ſa tracios;
Mais vaut d amor qi ben eſt enveios
Un dols plorar non fait qatorze ris.
Quant eu li quier merce en genoillos,
E la mi colpa et mi met ochaiſos,
Et l aigua m cur avel per mer lo vis,
Et ela m fai un regard amoros,
Et eu li bais la bucha els ols amdos,
Adonc mi par un ioi de paradis.

Drugge, *v. Sax.* to drag

Dubbed, *part pa. Sax.* created a knight; the phraſe is derived from the ſtroke (with a ſword or otherwiſe), which was always a principal ceremony at the creation of a knight; at dubban, Iſland, ſignifies to ſtrike: this ſtroke in French was called *la colée.* See *L'Ordene de Chevaleria par Huc de Tabarie*, ver. 244, *ſeq.* publiſhed by M. Barbazan and *Du Cange* in v. *Alapa Militaris*

Duetee, *n. Fr.* duty, what is due to any one

Dulle, *v. act. Sax.* to make dull

Dulle, *v. neut Sax.* to grow dull

Dun is in the mire. See Ray's Proverbial Similes, p. 319, as dull as Dun in the mire. I ſuppoſe Dun was a nickname given to the aſs from his colour, as well as Burnell

Dure, *v. Fr.* to endure

Dureſſe, *n. Fr.* hardſhip, ſeverity

Duſked, *pa. t. Sax.* grew dark or dim

Dutee, as duetee

Dwale, *n. Sax.* a ſleeping potion

Dwellings, *n. pl. Sax.* delays; moras, orig.

Dwined, *part. pa. Sax.* waſted

E.

Ered, *part. pa.* ploughed. See Ere

Ebruike, *adj.* Hebrew

Eccleſiaſt, *n.* an eccleſiaſtical perſon, the book of Eccleſiaſtes or Eccleſiaſticus

Eche, *adj. Sax.* alce, each one, every one, of any number

Eche, *v. Sax.* to add, to add to, to encreaſe

Edippe, *pr. n.* Œdipus

Effect, *n. Fr.* ſubſtance

Eft, *adv. Sax.* again

Eftſone, eftſones, *adv. Sax.* ſoon after, preſently

Egalitee, *n. Fr.* equality

Eger, egre, *adj. Fr.* ſharp

Egge, *v. Sax.* to incite

Eggement, *n. Sax.* incitement

Egging, *n.* as eggement

Egremoine, *n. Fr.* agrimony

Eire, for air

Eiſel, *n. Sax.* vinegar

Elat, *part. pa. Lat.* elated

Elde, *n. Sax.* old age

Elde, *v. Sax.* to make old, *v. neut.* to grow old

Elenge, *adj.* ſtrange, *Ur.* It ſometimes ſeems to ſignify dull, cheerleſs, as in *Pierce Plough*, 111, b. heavy-chered I yede, and elenge in herte.

Elengeneſſe, *n.* in the orig. ſoucy, care, trouble

Elfe, *n Sax.* a witch, a faery

Elf-quene, *n.* queen of elves or faeries

Eli, *pr n.* ſeems to be put for Elie. See 2 Kings, chap. 19

Elie, *pr. n.* Elijah. The Carmelites pretend that Elijah was the founder of their order

Eliſee, *pr. n.* Eliſha, the diſciple of Elijah

Elles, *adv. Sax.* elſe; elles what, any thing elſe; elles wher, elſewhere

Elviſh, *adj. Sax* faery-like, fantaſtick; it ſometimes ſeems to ſignify ſhy, reſerved

Embeliſe, *v. Fr.* to beautify

Emboldе, *v. Fr.* to make bold
Emboyſſement, *s. Fr.* ambuſh
Embrouded, *part. pa. Fr.* embroidered
Eme, *s. Sax.* uncle
Emforth, *prep. Sax.* even with; emforth my might, even with my might, with all my power; emforth my wit, to the utmoſt of my underſtanding: it is a corruption of evenforth, which occurs at length in *Pierce Plough*, 66, b. evenforth with thyſelfe
Empeire, *v. Fr.* to impair, hurt
Emperice, *s. Fr.* empereſs
Emplaſtre, *v. Fr.* to plaſter over
Emplie, *v.* to infold, to involve; implicat, orig.
Empoiſoner, *s. Fr.* a poiſoner
Empreſſe, *v. neut. Fr.* to crowd
Empriſe, *s Fr.* undertaking
Empte, *v. Sax.* to empty
Embattelled, *part. pa. Fr.* indented like a battlement
Enbibing, *part. pr. Lat.* imbibing
Enboſed, *part. pa. Fr. embuſqué*, ſheltered in a wood, *Du.* 353
Enboſſed, *part. pa. Fr. embuſſé*, raiſed
Enbrace, *v. Fr.* to take hold of
Enbraude, *v. Fr.* to embroider
Encenſe, *s. Fr.* incenſe
Encenſe, *v. Fr.* to burn incenſe, to burn incenſe to
Enchauſing, *s. Fr.* heat
Encheſon, *s. Fr.* cauſe, occaſion
Encorporing, *part pr. Fr.* incorporating
Endelong, *prep. Sax.* along, *adv.* lengthways
Endetted, *part. pa. Fr.* indebted
Endite, *v. Fr.* to dictate, relate
Endoute, *v. Fr.* to doubt, to fear
Endric, *v. Sax.* to ſuffer
Enee, *pr. n.* Æneas
Eneidos, *pr. n.* Virgils Æneis
Enfamined, *part. pa. Fr.* hungry
Enfecte, *v. Fr* to infect, *part. pa.* infected
Enforce, *v. Fr.* to ſtrengthen
Enforced, *part. pa.* conſtrained by force
Enfortune, *v. Fr.* to endow with a certain fortune
Engendrure, *s. Fr.* generation
Engined, *part. pa. Fr.* racked, tortured
Engluting, rather enluting, ſtopping with clay
Engregge, *v. Fr.* to aggravate
Engreve, *v. Fr.* to hurt
Enhaunſe, *v. Fr.* to raiſe
Enhaunſed, *part. pa.* raiſed
Enhort, *v. Fr.* to exhort
Enlaced, *part. pa. Fr.* entangled
Enlangoured, *part. pa. Fr.* faded with langour
Enleven, *num. Sax.* eleven
Enlumine, *v. Fr.* to illuminate
Enoint, *part. pa. Fr.* anointed
Enſeled, *part. pa. Fr.* ſealed up, kept ſecret
Enſpire, *v. Fr.* to inſpire
Enſure, *v. Fr.* to aſſure
Entaile, *s. Fr.* ſhape
Entailed, *part. pa. Fr.* carved
Entalente, *v. Fr.* to excite
Entend, *v. Fr.* to attend
Entendement, *s. Fr.* underſtanding
Entente, *s. Fr.* intention
Ententif, *adj. Fr.* attentive
Enterchangeden, *pa. t. pl. Fr.* exchanged
Entermedled, *part. pa. Fr.* intermixed
Entermete, *v. Fr.* to interpoſe
Enterpart, *v. Fr.* to ſhare
Entetched, *part. pa. Fr. entaché*; it is applied indifferently to things and perſons marked or endowed with good or bad qualities: entetched and defouled with yvel, ſtained and defiled with evil; the beſt entetched, endowed with the beſt qualities
Entree, *s. Fr.* entry
Entremees, *s. pl. Fr.* choice diſhes ſerved in between the courſes at a feaſt, *Cotg.*
Entrike, *v. Fr.* to deceive, to entangle
Entuned, *part. pa. Fr.* tuned
Entunes, *s. pl. Fr.* ſongs, tunes, *Du.* 309.
Envenime, *v. Fr.* to poiſon
Enveniming, *s.* poiſoning
Envie, *v. Fr.* to vie, to contend, *Du.* 406
Environ, *adv. Fr.* about, *Conf. Am.* 239, b.
Environ, *v. Fr.* to ſurround
Envoluped, *part. pa. Fr.* wrapt up
Envyned, ſtored with wine
Epiſtolis, *Lat.* epiſtles
Equipolences, *s. pl. Fr.* equivalents
Er, *adv. Sax.* before, before that
Erande, *s. Sax.* a meſſage, an errand, *Du.* 134.
Ere, *v. Fr.* to plough
Ereos, for Eros, *pr. n. Gr.* Love
Erke, *adj. Sax.* weary, ſick,
Erly *adv. Sax.* early
Erme, *v. Sax.* to grieve
Ermin, *adj.* Armenian
Erneſt, *s. Sax.* zeal, ſtudious purſuit of any thing
Erneſtful, *adj.* ſerious
Erratike, *adj. Fr.* wandering, applied to the planets
Erraunt, *part. pr. Fr.* ſtrolling, applied to a thief
Ers, erſe, *s. Sax.* the fundament
Erſt, *adv. ſuperl.* of er, firſt, at erſt, at firſt, for the firſt time; it is ſometimes redundant, long erſt or, long before
Ertheles, *adj. Sax.* without earth
Eſchaunge, *s. Fr.* exchange
Eſcheve, eſchue *v. Fr.* to ſhun, to decline
Eſculapius, *pr. n.* a book of medicine under his name is mentioned by *Fabric. Bibl. Gr.* t. i p. 56, n.
Eſe, *s. Fr* pleaſure
Eſe, *v.* to accommodate
Eſement, *s.* relief
Eſie, *adj.* gentle, light; eſie ſighes, which paſſage Lord Surrey has copied, Songes, &c. p. 12, "and "eaſy ſighes, ſuch as folkes draw in love."
Eſier, *comp. d.* lighter; of eſier avail; of lighter or leſs value
Eſilich, *adv.* gently
Eſperus, *pr. n.* Heſperus, a name of the planet Venus
Eſpiaille, *s. Fr.* ſpying, private watching
Eſpirituell, *adj. Fr.* ſpiritual, heavenly
Eſſoine, *s. Fr.* a legal excuſe
Eſtat, eſtate, *s. Fr.* ſtate, condition, adminiſtration of government

Eſtatelich, *adj.* ſtately
Eſtres, *n. pl. Fr.* the inward parts of a building
Eterne, *adv. Lat.* everlaſting
Ethe, *adj. Sax.* eaſy
Evangiles, *n. pl. Fr.* goſpels
Even, *adj. Sax.* equal; an even Criſten, a fellow Chriſtian
Evenlike, *adj. Sax.* equal
Evenlike, *adv.* equally
Ever, *adv. Sax.* always; ever in on, continually in the ſame manner; ever lenger the more, where this elliptical phraſe is expreſſed at length.
Everich, *adj. Sax.* every one of many, each of two
Ew, *n. Sax.* yew
Exaltat, *part. pa. Lat.* exalted
Exametron, is explained by the context to ſignify a verſe of ſix feet; it uſually ſignifies the heroic verſe, but here, I ſuppoſe, muſt be underſtood to mean the iambic, in which the ancient tragedies were commonly verſified.
Executour, *n. Fr.* executioner
Executrice, *n. Fr.* a female executioner
Exorciſations, *n. pl. Fr.* exorciſms, conjurations
Expans yeres, "In this and the following verſes "the poet deſcribes the Alphonſine aſtronomical "tables by the ſeveral parts of them, wherein "ſome technical terms occur which were uſed "by the old aſtronomers, and continued by the "compilers of thoſe tables. Collect years are "certain ſums of years, with the motions of the "heavenly bodies correſponding to them, as of "20, 40, 60, &c. diſpoſed into tables; and expans "years are the ſingle years, with the motions of "the heavenly bodies anſwering to them, be-"ginning at 1, and continued on to the ſmalleſt "collect ſum, as 20, &c. A root or radix is any "certain time taken at pleaſure, from which as "an era the celeſtial motions are to be com-"puted. By proporcionel convenientes are meant "the tables of proportional parts." Gloſſ. *Ur.* "Argument in aſtronomy is an arch whereby "we ſeek another unknown arch proportional "to the firſt." *Chambers*
Expectaunt, *part. pa. Fr.* waiting
Expleite, *v. Fr.* to perform
Ey, *n. Sax.* an egg; but as it were a grypes aye, *Conf. Am.* 22
Ey, *interj.*
Eyen, *n. pl. Sax.* eyes
Eyre, *for* air
Eyriſh, *adj.* aerial, belonging to the air

F.

Fable, *n. Fr.* idle diſcourſe
Faconde, *n. Fr.* eloquence
Facounde, *adj.* eloquent *Du.* 926.
Faerie, *n. Fr.* the nation of Faeries. Enchantment, the work of faeries; king of Faerie; quene of Faerie; contree of Faerie
Fain, *adj. Sax.* glad; than was I as fayne as foule of fayre morowe, *Pierce Plough*, 47, b.
Fain, *adv.* gladly
Faine, *v. Fr.* to feign, to diſſemble; to ſwinke and travail he not faineth, he does not feign or pretend only to labour, *i. e.* he labours ſeriouſly.
Fairehede, *n. Sax.* beauty
Faitour, *n. Fr.* a lazy idle fellow, *Pierce Plough*, 32 b. 33 b. faitard, faiteur, un pareſſeux, *pigr. Lacombe*
Falding, a kind of coarſe cloth, *St.* He derives it from the A. S feald, plica: however that may be Helmoldus [*Chron. Slav.* l. i. c. 1,] ſpeaks of *indumenta lanea* (probably coarſe enough) *quæ nos appellamus faldnes*; and *fallin* in Iriſh, according to Lhuyd, ſignifies a mantle. Giraldus Cambr. [*Topog. Hibern. diſt.* 3. c. 10,] deſcribes the Iriſh as clothed in *phalingis lanciis, vice palliorum.* Faldyng cloth, *Amphibalus. Birrus-Prompt. Parvi* Row cloth, as faldyng and other like. *Endromis Amphibalus ibid.* See *Du Cange*, in v. *Amphibalus*
Fall, *for* fallen, *part. pa.*
Falſen, *v. Fr.* to falſify, to deceive
Falwe, *adj. Sax.* yellow
Falwes, *n. pl. Sax.* harrowed lands
Famuler, *adj. Lat.* domeſtic
Fan, *n.* the quintaine, which is called a fan or van, from its turning round like a weathercock. See *Du Cange* in v. *Vana. Meneſtrier ſur les tournois, Dict. Etymol.* in v. *Quintaine*, and *Kennet's Parech.*
Fande, *pa. t.* of finde, *v. Sax.* found
Fane, *n.* a weathercock
Fantaſie, *n. Fr.* fancy
Fantome, *n. Fr.* any falſe imagination; *et dirent pluſieurs qui'ls avoient été en* fantoſme. *Froiſſart*, v. i. c. 63
Farce, *v. Fr.* farder, to paint
Fardel, *n. Fr.* a burthen
Fare, *v. Sax.* to go; to fare wel, to ſpeed, to be happy
Fare, *n.* ſeems to have been derived from the French v. faire, whenever it can be interpreted by the word ado; this hote fare; for which the wardein chidde and made fare; what amounteth all this fare? betwixt us two needeth no ſtrange fare; and leve this nice fare. In other inſtances it follows the ſenſe of the Saxon v. fare, as in the compound words welfare, thoroughfare, &c.
Faren, fare, *part. pa.*
Fares, *for* fareth
Faring, *part. pr.*
Farme, *n. Sax.* food, a meal. See *Spelman* in v. *Firma*
Farſe, *v. Fr.* farcir, to ſtuff
Fathe, *n.* See Lathe
Faute, *n. Fr.* want
Fawe, *adj. Sax.* glad; as fain
Fay, *n. Fr.* faith
Fayre, *adj. Sax.* fair
Fayre, *adv.* fairly, gracefully
Febleſſe, *v. Fr.* weakneſs
Fecche, *v. Sax.* to fetch
Fee, *n. Sax.* money. It ſeems to ſignify inheritable poſſeſſions, in contradiſtinction to money or moveables

Feffe, *v. Fr.* to infeoff, to preſent
Feine, *v. Fr.* to feign
Fel, *adv. Sax.* cruel, deſtructive
Felaw, *n. Sax.* fellow, companion
Felawſhip, *n. Sax.* company
Felawſhipe, *v.* to accompany
Felde, *n. Sax.* a field
Felden, *pa. t. pl.* of felle, *v. Sax.* felled, made to fall
Fele, *adj. Sax.* many
Fele, *v. Sax.* to feel, to have ſenſe, to perceive
Fell, *n. Sax.* ſkin
Felonie, *n Fr.* all ſorts of criminal violence
Feloun, *adj. Fr.* cruel
Feminie, *pr. n.* the country of Amazons
Femininitee, *n. Fr.* womanhood
Fend, *n. Sax.* an enemy, the devil
Fendliche, *adj.* deviliſh
Fenne, *n.* the name of the ſections of Avicenne's great work intituled *Canum.* See *Canon*
Feoffed, *part. pa. Fr.* infeoffed
Fer, *adv. Sax.* far
Ferre, *comp.* further
Ferreſt, *ſuperl.* furtheſt
Ferd, fered, *part. pa.* of fere, terrified
Ferd, ferde, *pa. t.* of fare
Ferden *pa. t. pl.*
Fere, *n. Sax.* a companion, a wife, in fere, together, in company
Fere, *for* fire
Fere, *n. Sax.* fear
Fere, *v. Sax.* to terrify
Ferforth, ferforthly, *adv. Sax.* far forth
Ferly, *adj. Sax.* ſtrange
Fermacie, *for* pharmacie, *n. Fr.* a medicine
Ferme, *n. Fr.* a farm
Fermerere, *n. Lat. infirmarius*, the officer in a religious houſe who had the care of the infirmary, *Du Cange* in v.
Ferne, *adv. Sax.* before
Fers, *adj. Fr.* fierce
Fers, *n. Du* 654, *ſeq.* the piece at cheſs next to the king, which we and other European nations call the queen, though very improperly, as Hyde has obſerved. *Pherz* or *Pherzán*, which is the Perſian name for the ſame piece, ſignifies the king's chief counſellor or general. *Hiſt. Shahilud.* p. 88, 9
Ferthing, *n. Sax.* a farthing, any very ſmall thing; no ferthing—of greſe, not the ſmalleſt ſpot of greaſe
Feſt, *n. Sax.* fiſt
Feſte, *n. Fr.* feaſt
Feſteying, *part. pr. Fr.* feaſting
Feſtlich, *adj.* uſed to feaſts
Fetche, *n. Sax.* a vetch
Fete, *n. Fr.* work
Fetiſe, *adj.* well made, neat
Fetiſely, *adv.* neatly, properly
Fette, fet, *part. pa.* of fecche
Fey, *n. Fr.* faith
Feyre, *n. Fr.* a fair or market
Fiaunce, *n. Fr.* truſt
Fidel, *n. Sax.* a fiddle
Fill, *for* fell, *pa. t.* of fall
Finch, *n. Sax.* a ſmall bird; to pull a finch, was a proverbial expreſſion, ſignifying to ſtrip a man by fraud of his money, &c.

> If I may gripe a riche man
> I ſhall ſo *pulle* him, if I can,
> That he ſhall in a fewe ſtoundes
> Leſe all his markes and his poundes.—
> Our maidens ſhall eke plucke him ſo
> That him ſhall neden fethers mo.
>
> Withoute ſcalding they hem *pulle*.

Find, *v. Sax.* to find, to ſupply. **Fint**, *for* findeth
Fine, fin, *n. Fr.* end
Fine, *v. Fr.* to ceaſe
Fine, *adj. Fr.* of fine force, of very neceſſity
Fit. *n. Sax.* a diviſion or ſhort portion of a poem. See Gloſſ. *Percy* in v.
Fittingeſt, *adj. ſup. Sax.* moſt fitting
Fixe, *adj. Fr.* fixed
Flaie, *for* fley, *pa. t.* of flee, flew
Flaine, *part. pa.* of flaie, *v. Sax.* flaied or flead,
Flambe, *n. Fr.* flame
Flatour, *n. Fr.* a flatterer. *Conf. Am.* 154, b.
Flawe, *adj.* yellow, from the *Lat. flavus.* Gloſſ. *Ur*
Flecked, *adj.* ſpotted
Fleckering, *part. pr.* See *Flicker*
Flee, *v. neut. Sax.* to fly
Fleen, *n. pl. Sax.* fleas
Fleme, *v. Sax.* to baniſh
Flemed, *part. pa.*
Flemer, *n.* baniſher
Flete, *v. Sax.* to float, to ſwim
Flete, *for* fleteth
Fleting, *part. pr.*
Flicker, *v. neut. Sax.* to flutter
Flit, *v. neut. Sax.* to fly; *elle fuit*, orig.
Flit, *v. act. R.* to remove
Flitering, *part. pr.* floating, *fluitantus* orig.
Flitted, *part. pr.* removed, ſhifted
Flo, *n. Sax.* an arrow, **Flone**, *pl.*
Flockmel, *adv. Sax.* in a flock
Florein, *pr. n.* a ſpecies of gold coin
Flotery, *adj. Sax.* floating
Flotte, *v. Fr.* to float,
Flotte, *v.* as flete
Floureles, *adj.* without flower
Flourette, *n. Fr.* a ſmall flower
Floyting, playing on the flute
Foine, *v. Fr.* to make a paſs in fencing, to puſh
Foiſon, *n. Fr.* abundance
Foled, *part. pa. Sax.* foaled
Folehardineſs, *n. Fr.* raſhneſs,
Fole-large, *adj. penult*, fooliſhly liberal
Folie, *n. Fr.* folly
Folily, *adv.* fooliſhly
Folwe, *v. Sax.* to follow
Foly, *adj.* fooliſh
Fond, *adj. Sax.* fooliſh
Fond, *pa. t.* of find
Fonde, *v. Sax.* to try
Fong, *v. Sax.* to take
Fonne, *n. Sax.* a fool

Fonne, *v.* to be foolish
Font-ſtone, *n. Sax.* a font for baptizing
For, *prep. Sax. pro. Lat. pour. Fr.*; it is frequently prefixed to verbs in the infinitive mood in the French manner; for to tellen; for to don; *pour dire, pour faire;* for to han ben, *pour avoir été.* It ſometimes ſignifies againſt; for percing of his herte, againſt, or to prevent, piercing; for ſteling of the roſe; againſt ſtealing. See *Pierce Plough*; 31. ſome ſhall ſowe the ſacke for ſhedding of the wheate, *i. e.* to prevent ſhedding
For, *conj. Sax. quia, Lat. pour ce que, Fr.* becauſe that; for him luſte to ride ſo; for ſhe wolde virtue pleſe; for I tecche
For, in compoſition, has various powers; it is moſt commonly intenſive of the ſignification of the word with which it is joined, as in forſhronken, fordry, forfered, &c.; ſometimes privative, as in forboden, foryete; and ſometimes only communicative of an ill ſenſe, as in forfaite, forfare, forjuged, &c.
For, *Fr.* and ver, *Belg.* have ſimilar powers in compoſition
Forbere, *v. Sax.* to abſtain
Forboden, *part. pa.* of forbede, *v. Sax.* forbidden
Forbrake, *pa. t.* broke off; abrupi, orig.
Forbruſed, *part. pa. Fr.* ſorely bruiſed
Force, *n. Fr.* no force, no matter; I do no force, I care not; I do no force of your divinitee, I care not for your divinity; no force of deth, no matter for death; they yeve no force, they care not; *de fruit avoir ne fait force.* orig.
Forcutte, *v. Sax.* to cut through
Fordo, *v. Sax.* to do away, to ruin
Fordon, fordo, *part. pa.* undone
Fordrive, (fordriven) *part. pa. Sax.* driven away
Fordronken, *part. pa. Sax.* very drunken
Fordry, *adj. Sax.* very dry
Fordwined, *part. pa. Sax.* waſted away
Fore, (foren) *part. pa.* of fare, *v. Sax.* gone
Fore. *prep. Sax.* is ſeldom uſed by itſelf; in compoſition it has the power of before.
Forein, *n.* a jakes, Gloſſ. *Ur* from *Sk.*; the context ſeems rather to require that it ſhould ſignify an outward court or garden
Foreweting, *n. Sax.* foreknowledge
Forewote, forewete, *v Sax.* to foreknow
Forfaite, *v. Fr.* to miſdo
Forfare, *v. Sax.* to fare ill
Forfered, *part. pa. Sax* much afraid
Forgifte, *n. Sax.* forgiveneſs
Forgon, *inf. v. Sax.* to omit, to loſe
Forgrowen, *part. pa. Sax.* overgrowen
Forjuged, *part. pa. Fr.* wrongfully judged
Forkerve, *v. Sax.* to carve or cut through
Forlaſt, *part. pa. Sax.* left off entirely
Forleſe, *v. Sax.* to loſe entirely
Forlete, *v. Sax.* to give over, to quit
Forlore, (forloren) *part. pa. Sax.* utterly loſt
Forloyne, *n. Fr.* forlonge, a term of the chaſe, which ſignifies that the game is far off, *Du.* 386
Forme, *adj. Sax.* firſt; Adam our forme father
Formeſt, *adj. ſup. Sax.* firſt, *Du.* 890
Formell, A. F. 371, is put for the female of any fowl, more frequently for a female eagle
Forpined, *part. pa. Sax.* waſted away, tormented
Forſake, *v. Sax.* to deny
Forſhapen, *part. pa. Sax.* transformed
Folſhronke, (forſhronken) *part. pa. Sax.* ſhrunk up
Forſleuthe, forſlouthe, forſlogge, *v. Sax.* to loſe through ſloth
Forſongen, *part. pa. Sax.* tired with ſinging
Forſter, *n. Fr.* a foreſter.
Foreſtraught, *part. pa. Sax* diſtracted
Forthby, *adv. Sax.* forward by
Forther, *v. Sax.* to further, to advance
Forthinke, *v. Sax.* to grieve, to vex
Forthought, *pa. t.* of forthinke
Forthren, *inf. m.* of forther
Forthy. *conj. Sax.* therefore
Fortroden, *part. pa.* of fortread, *v. Sax.* troden down
Fortuit, *adj. Fr.* accidental
Fortune, *v. Fr.* to make fortunate, to give good or bad fortune
Fortunous, *adj.* proceeding from fortune
Forwaked, *part. pa. Sax.* having waked long
Forwandred, *part. pa. Sax.* having wandred long
Forwelked, *part. pa. Sax.* much wrinkled
Forwept, *part. pa. Sax.* having much wept
Forwered, *part. pa. Sax.* worn out
Forewerie, *adj. Sax.* very weary
Forword, (foreword) *n. Sax.* a promiſe or covenant
Forwounded, *part. pa. Sax.* much wounded
Forwrapped, *part. pa.* wrapped up
Foryelde, *v. Sax.* to repay
Foryete, *v. Sax.* to forget
Foryetten, *part. pa.*
Foſter, *n. Fr.* as foſter
Foſtred, *part. pa.* of foſter, *v. Sax.* nouriſhed
Foſtring, *n.* nutriment
Fote-hot, immediately
Fote-mantel, means, I ſuppoſe, a ſort of riding-petticoat, ſuch as is now uſed by market-women
Fother, *n. Sax.* a carriage-load; an indefinite large quantity
Foudre, *n. Fr.* lightning
Foule, *v. Sax.* a bird
Found, *pa. t.* of find, ſupplied
Founde, *v.* as fonde
Foundred, *pa. t.* of founder, *v. Fr.* fell down
Fowertie, *num. Sax.* forty
Foxerie, *n.* foxiſh manners
Fra, for fro, *prep. Sax.* from; it is ſometimes uſed adverbially, till and fra, to and fro
Fraine, *v. Sax.* to aſk
Franknet, *n. pl. Sax.* ſpots, freckles
Franchiſe, *n. Fr.* frankneſs, generoſity
Frank, *n.* a denomination of French money; anſwering at preſent to the *livre Tournois*
Frankelein, *pr. n.*
Fraught, *v. Sax.* to freight, load a ſhip
Fre, *adj. Sax.* willing, unconſtrained, at liberty, liberal, bountiful
Fredom, *n. Sax.* as franchiſe
Freeltee, *n. Fr.* frailty
Fregius, for Phrygius

Fremde, fremed, *adj. Sax.* ſtrange, to frend he to fremed, *Pierce Plough*, 79
Frenetike *adj. Fr.* frantick
Frenſeie, *s. Fr.* a frenzy
Frere, *s. Fr.* a friar, *Pierce Plough*, 12. a. b.
Freſhe, *v. Fr.* to refreſh
Fret, *s. Fr.* a band
Fret, frette, *part. pa. Fr.* fraughte, filled, or perhaps wrought in a kind of fretwork: a ſort of blazon is called *fretté*; and through the fret full of falſhede—we ſhould read—a treuthe fret full of falſhede
Frete, *v. Sax.* to eat, devour
Freting, *part. pr.*
Frette, (freted) *part. pa.*
Freyne, *v. Sax.* as fraine
Friſe, *pr. n.* Friezland
Frote, *v. Fr.* to rub
Frounceles, *adj. Fr.* without wrinkle
Froward, *adj. Sax.* averſe
Fro ye, from you; ye is put for you, that fro ye may rhyme, in appearance at leaſt, with joye and Troye
Fructuous, *adj. Fr.* fruitful
Fruiteſtere, *s. Sax* a female ſeller of fruit
Ful-drive, *part. pa.* fully driven, completed
Fulke, (*Fr.* folke) *s. Sax.* people
Fulſumneſſe, *s. Sax.* fatiety
Fumetere, *pr. n.* of a plant, fumitory, *fumaria—pungat bilem et humores aduſtos. Ray's Synopſis.*
Fumoſitee, *s. Fr.* fumes ariſing from exceſſive drinking
Fundament, *s. Fr.* foundation
Furial, *adj. Fr.* raging
Fuſible, *adj. Fr.* capable of being melted
Fy, *interj. Fr.* I ſay fy, I cry ſhame

G.

Gabbe, *v. Fr.* to talk idly, to lie; gabbe I of this? *num id mentior?*
Gacides, is probably a miſprint for *Æacides*, though I do not know what Chiron had any right to that title
Gadling, *s. Sax.* an idle vagabond
Gadred, *part. pa. Sax.* gathered
Gailer, *s. Fr.* gaoler
Gaillard, *adj. Fr.* briſk, gay
Gaitre-beries, berries of the dog-wood tree, *cornus famina*
Galaxie, *pr. n.* the Milky Way, a track in the heavens ſo called
Gale, *v. Sax.* Galan Lax, ſignifies *canere*.
Galfride, *pr. n.* Geoffrey of Monmouth, Geoffrey Vinſauf. See *Gaufride*
Galice, *pr. n.* a province of Spain, the famous ſhrine of St. James at Compoſtella was in Galicia
Galingale, *pr. n.* ſweet cypreſs
Gallien, Galian, *pr. n.* Galen
Galoche, *s. Fr.* a ſhoe
Galpe, *v. Sax.* to gape, to yawn
Galping, *part. pr.* gaping, yawning
Galwes, *s. pl. Sax.* the gallows
Gan, *pa. t.* of ginne, *v. Sax.* began
Gannen, *pl.*
Gar, *v. Sax.* to make
Gardebrace, *s. Fr.* armour for the arm
Gargate, *s. Fr.* the throat
Gariſoun, ſeems to be uſed as a *v.* to heal; the orig. has gariſon, a. n. healing, recovery
Garnement, *s. Fr.* a garment
Garner, *s. Fr.* a granary or ſtoreroom
Garniſon, *s. Fr.* a guard or garriſon
Gaſtneſs, *s. Sax.* gaſtlineſs
Gate, gatte, *pa. t.* of get, *v. Sax.* gat, begat
Gate, *s. Sax.* a way; went her gate, went her way
Gatiſden, *pr. n.* John Gateſden, author of a medical work, entitled *Roſa Anglicana*, in the 14th century. See *Tanner* in v.
Gaude, *s. Fr.* jeſt, gaudes, *pl.* ridiculous tricks
Gaufride, *pr. n.*
Gaure, *v.* to ſtare, for them that gaured and caſt on me their ſight *Lyd. Gra.* b. ix. f. 22. b.
Gawain, *pr. n.* nephew to King Arthur by his ſiſter, married to King Lot: ſo ſays the Brit. Hiſt. which goes under the name of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and I believe it will be in vain to look for any more authentick genealogiſt of all that family; he is there called Walganus. The Fr. romancers, who have built upon Geoffrey's foundations, agree in deſcribing Gawain as a model of knightly courteſy: to this his eſtabliſhed character our author alludes
Gayler, *s. Fr.* as gailer
Geant, *s. Fr.* giant; the crane the geant
Gear, *s.* See gere
Gende, for gent
Genelon, *pr. n.* of one of Charlemagne's officers, who by his treachery was the cauſe of the defeat at Roncevaux, the death of Roland, &c. for which he was torn to pieces by horſes. This at leaſt is the account of the author who calls himſelf Archbiſhop Turpin, and of the romancers who followed him, upon whoſe credit the name of Genelon or Ganelon was for ſeveral centuries centuries a ſynonymous expreſſion for the worſt of traitors. Our Author alludes to his treachery, and to his puniſhment. See alſo *Du.* 1121.
Gent, *adj. Fr.* neat, pretty
Genterie, *s. Fr.* gentility
Gentil, *adj. Fr.* in its original ſenſe means welborn, of a noble family, "Il y avoit un Chevalier, "Capitaine de la ville:—point *gentilhomme* n' "eſtoit:—et l'avoit fait, pour ſa vaillance, le "Roy Edouard Chevalier," *Froiſſart*, v. ii. c. 77. It is commonly put for civil, liberal, gentlemanlike
Gentileſſe, *s. Fr.* follows the ſignifications of gentil
Geomancie, *s. Fr.* divinations by figures made on the earth
Gere, *s. Sax.* all ſorts of inſtruments; of cookery, of war, of apparel, of chemiſtry; in his quainte geres, in their ſtrange faſhions
Gerie, gerful, changeable, probably from the *Fr.* girer, to turn round; gierful
Gerlond, *s. Fr.* a garland, the name of a dog

Geſſe, *v. Sax.* to gueſs
Geſt, *n. Sax.* a gueſt
Geſtes, *n. pl. Lat.* actions, adventures
Geſtour, *n.* a relater of jeſts
Get, *n. Fr.* geſte, faſhion, behaviour; with that falſe get, with that cheating contrivance
Gethe, for goeth
Gie, *v. Sax.* to guide
Gigges, *n. pl.* irregular ſounds produced by the wind, &c. Gigue, *Fr.* ſignified a muſical inſtrument like a fiddle, and from thence a ſort of light tune, *Menage* in v. It is probably a word of Teutonic original. See Junius
Gilbertin, *pr. n.* an Engliſh phyſician of the 13th century. See *Fulbrictus, Bibl. Med. Æt.* in v. *Gilbertus de Aquilla*
Gilt, *part. pa. Sax.* gilded, of the colour of gold
Gilt, *n. Sax.* guilt
Gilour, *n. Fr.* a deceiver
Gilte-les, *adj. Sax.* free from guilt
Giltif, *adj. Sax.* guilty, *Conf. Am.* 62, b.
Gin, *n. Fr.* engine, contrivance
Gingiber, *n. Fr.* ginger
Ginne, *v. Sax.* to begin
Gipciere, *n. Fr.* a pouch or purſe
Gipe, *n. Fr.* an upper frock or caſſock
Gipon, *n. Fr.* a ſhort caſſock
Girde, *v. Sax.* to ſtrike, to ſmite; this word is perhaps the original of gride in Spenſer. See Obſ. on Spenſ. v. ii. p. 62
Girdelſtede, *n. Sax.* the waiſt, the place of the girdle
Girles, *n. pl. Sax.* young perſons either male or female
Girt, *part. pa.* of girde; thurgh girt, ſmitten through
Giſarme, *n. Fr.* a battleax. See *Du Cange* in *Giſarma*
Giſe, *n. Fr.* guiſe, faſhion; at his owen giſe, in his own manner, as he would wiſh
Gite, *n. Fr.* a gown
Giterne, *n. Fr.* a guitar
Giterning, *n.* playing on a giterne
Glade, *v. Sax.* to make glad
Glader, *n.* one that maketh glad
Gladſom, *adj. Sax.* pleaſant
Glaſe, for gloſe
Glaſe, *v. Sax.* to put glaſs into windows, *Du.* 323
Glaſinge, *n.* glaſswork, *Du.* 327
Gle, *n. Sax.* mirth, muſic; glees, *pl.* muſical inſtruments
Glede, *n. Sax.* a burning coal; gledes, *pl.* ſparks of fire
Gleire, *n. Fr.* the white of an egg
Glent. *pa. t.* glanced
Gleve, *n. Fr.* glaive, a lance
Glimſing, *n.* glimmering
Gliteren, *par. t. pl.* of gliter, *v. Sax.*
Glode, *pa. t.* of glide, *v. Sax.* ſhe glode forth as an adder doth, *Conf. Am.* 105
Glombe, *v. Sax.* to look gloomy
Gloſe. *n. Fr.* a comment or interpretation
Gloſe, *v.* to comment or interpret, to ſpeak tenderly, to flatter
Gloton, *n. Fr.* a glutton
Gloweden, *pa. t. pl.* of glow, *v. Sax.*
Gnarre, *n.* a hard knot in a tree
Gnat, *n. Sax.* is put for any little worthleſs thing
Gniding, *part. pr. Sax.* rubbing
Gnoffe, *n.* an old cuff, a miſer, Gloſſ. *Ur.* I know not upon what authority
Gnowe, *pa. t.* of gnawe, *v. Sax.*
Go, *v. Sax.* means ſometimes to walk, in contradiſtinction to riding
Go, (gon) *part. pa.*
Gobbet, *n. Fr.* a morſel, a bit
God, *n. Sax.* Gód toforne, God going before; Deo favente, Goddes armes two; Goddes bones, vulgar oaths. A' Goddes half. See Halfe
Gode, good, *n. Sax.* wealth, goods
Gode-les, *adj.* without money or goods
Godelyhede, *n. Sax.* goodneſs
Godeneſs, *n. Sax.* at godeneſs, at advantage; and ſo we ſhould read where the editt. have at gode mes, the orig. has *en bon point*
Godſib, *n. Sax.* a goſſip, a godfather
Goſiſh, *adj.* fooliſh, from the *Fr.* goſſe, dull ſtupid
Gold, *n.* a flower commonly called a turnſol. Gower ſays that Leucothea was changed

> Into a floure was named golde,
> Whiché ſtont governed of the ſonne.
> *Conf. Am.* 121. b.

Gold-hewen, *adj. Sax.* of a golden hue or colour
Goldſmithrie, *n. Sax.* goldſmiths work
Golet, *n. Fr.* the throat or gullet
Goliardeis, *Fr.* This jovial ſect ſeems to have been ſo called from Golias, the real or aſſumed name of a man of wit toward the end of the 12th century. He wrote the *Apocalypſis Golie*, and other pieces, in burleſque Latin rhymes, ſome of which have been falſely attributed to Walter Map. See *Tanner's Bibl. Brit.* in v. *Goliardus*. In ſeveral authors of the 12th century, quoted by *Du Cange*, the *Goliardi* are claſſed with the *jugulares et buffones*
Gomme, *n. Fr.* gum
Gon, *inf. m. Sax.* to go; ſo mote I gon, ſo may I fare well; ſo mote I ride or go, ſo may I fare well riding or walking, *i. e.* in all my proceedings. See Go.—Gon, *par. t. pl. part. pa.* gone,
Gonfanon, *n. Fr.* a banner or ſtandard
Gong, *n. Sax.* a littlehouſe, a jakes
Gonne, *n.* a gun
Gonnen, gonne, *pa. t. pl.* of ginne
Gore, *n.* It has been ſuggeſted to me by a learned perſon, whom I have not the honour to know, that gore is a common name for a ſlip of cloth or linen, which is inſerted in order to widen a garment in any particular place. *Gore* of a cloth, *lacinia, Prompt. Parv.* See alſo the gloſſary to Kennet's *Parech. Antiq.* in v. Gore. This ſenſe will ſuit very well with the context, unleſs we ſuppoſe that gore is there put for ſhirt, becauſe ſhirts have uſually gores in them; the expreſſion would certainly be very aukward, and unlike Chaucer's general manner, but in this place (The Rime of Sire Thopas) he may be

ſuppoſed to have taken it purpoſely from one of thoſe old romances which are the objects of his ridicule.

Goſe, for goes, goeth

Goſpellere, *n. Sax.* evangeliſt

Goſſomer, *n.* a thin cobweb-like ſubſtance which flies about in the air

Goſt, *n. Sax.* ſpirit, mind

Goth, *imp. d. perf. pl.* go ye

Governaille, *n. Fr.* government, ſteerage

Goune-cloth, cloth enough to make a gown

Gourd, *n.* a veſſel to carry liquor, perhaps ſo called from its ſhape

Gower, *pr. n.* an eminent Engliſh poet, to whom Chaucer directs his Troilus and Creſeide

Grace, *n. Fr.* favour; ſory grace, harde grace, misfortune

> So full of ſorowe am I, ſothe to ſayne,
> That certainly no more hard grace
> May ſit on me, for why? there is no ſpace.

So Hercules, ap. Eurip. Hꝛ.

> Τίμων κακῶν δὴ, κ'ὐκέτ' ἐσθ' ὁπωτιοῦν.

The criticiſm of Longinus, ſect. xl. is perhaps equally applicable to both paſſages.—With harde graee, is to be underſtood as ſpoken in a parentheſis of the cherl, misfortune attend him! See With. Save your grace, with your favour, *ſauvre votre grace*

Gracious, *adj. Fr.* agreeable, graceful

Grame, *n. Sax.* grief, anger; ſelle it to gode or grame

Grammere, *n. Fr.* grammar

Grand mercie, *Fr.* great thanks

Grane, *n. Fr.* a grain, a ſingle ſeed

Grange, *n. Fr.* a farm-houſe

Grapinel, *n. Fr.* a grappling-iron

Gratche, is perhaps the ſame with graithe, if not miſtaken for it. Gloſſ. *Ur.* See Greithe. The orig. has—*ſ'aous ne comme beguyne.*

Graunſon, *ſr. n.*

Grave, *v. Sax.* to carve, to engrave

Grave, (graven) *part. pa.* buried

Gre, *n. Fr.* pleaſure, ſatisfaction, from *gratus, Lat.* to receive in gre, to take kindly; the gre, the prize.—From *gradus, Lat.* it ſignifies a ſtep or degree

Grede, *n. Sax.* a greedy perſon

Grede, *v. barb. Lat.* to cry

Grein, *n. Fr. grein de Paris, de Paradis;* orig. grains of Paradiſe, a ſort of ſpice; grain of Portingale, a ſort of ſcarlet dye called kermes or vermilion

Greithe, *v. Sax.* to prepare, make ready

Grenched, *n. Sax.* childiſhneſs

Greſe, *n. Fr.* greaſe

Grete, for grede

Grette, *pa.* of grete, *v. Sax.* greeted, ſaluted

Greves, *n. pl. Sax.* groves

Grille, *adj. Fr.* horrible, grymm, gryl, and horryble; *horridus, Pron. pt. Pav.*

Grint, for grindeth

Grinte, *pa. t.* of grind, *v. Sax.* ground; grint with his teeth, gnaſhed with his teeth

Grinting, *n.* grinding, gnaſhing

Gris, *n. Fr.* a ſpecies of fur

Grifly, *adj. Sax.* dreadful

Groche, *v. Sax.* to grutch, to murmur

Groff, *adj. Sax.* flat on the ground

Groine, *n. Fr.* the ſnowt of a ſwine, a hanging lip

Groine, *v.* to hang the lip in diſcontent

Grone, *v. Fr.* to groan, to grunt

Grunt, *pa. t.* groaned

Grope, *v. Sax.* to ſearch, to examine by feeling

Grot, *n.* a coin worth fourpence

Grounden, *part. pa.* of grind

Groyning, *n.* diſcontent. See Groine

Guerdon, *n. Fr.* reward, recompenſe

Guerdon, *v.* to reward

Guerdonles, *adj.* without reward

Guido, *pr. n.* Guido de Columpnis, Guido dalle Colonne, of Meſſina in Sicily, a lawyer and a poet, died about 1290. *Quadrio*, vol. ii. p. 160. His hiſtory of the Trojan war, to which our Author refers, was written in Latin, and finiſhed in 1287. I have there intimated my ſuſpicion that he tranſlated it, for the moſt part, from a French romance of Benoit de Sainte More. However that may have been, Guido's work is certainly the original from which the later writers of the middle ages have generally taken their accounts of Trojan affairs. It was tranſlated into Italian in 1324 by Filippo Ceffi, a Florentine, [*Quadrio*, vol. vi. p. 475.] A French tranſlation is alſo extant, in which it is ſaid to be "tranſlatée, en "François, *premierement* du commandement "du Maire de la cité de Beauvais, en nom et "en honneur de Karles le Roy de France, l'an "mil. ccc. quatre vingtz," [mſ. Reg. 16 F. ix.] This is probably the French tranſlation mentioned by Lydgate in the Prologue to his Boke of Troye, which is a mere paraphraſe in verſe of Guido's hiſtory, with ſome digreſſions and additions of his own. Lydgate's work was finiſhed (as he tells us himſelf at the end) in 1420.

H.

Habergeon, *n. Fr.* a diminitive of hauberg, a coat of mail

Habilitee, *n. Fr.* ability

Habitacies, *n. pl. Fr.* places of habitation

Habite, *v. Fr.* to dwell

Habundant, *part. pr. Fr.* abundant

Hackenaie, *n. Fr.* an ambling horſe or pad

Hacking, *n. Fr.* cutting in pieces

Hadden, *pa. t. pl.* of have

Haf, *pa. t.* of heve, *v. Sax.* heaved, raiſed

Haie, hay, *n. Fr.* a hedge

Haile, *n. Sax.* health, welfare

Hailes, *pr. n.* of an abbey in Glouceſterſhire

Haire, *n. Fr.* a haircloth

Hakeney, *n. Fr.* as hackenaie

Haketon, *n. Fr.* a ſhort caſſock without ſleeves

Halden, for holden, *part. pa.* of hold

Halfe, *n. Sax.* a ſide, a part; a' Goddes half, *Du.* 370, on God's part, with God's favour; a' this halfe God, on this ſide of God; four halves, four ſides

Hali, *pr. n.* an Arabian phyſician, *Fabric. Bibl. Gr.* t. xiii. p. 87.

Halke, *n. Sax.* a corner
Halpe, *pa. t.* of help, *v. Sax.*
Hals, *n. Sax.* the neck
Halſe, *v. Sax.* to kiſs round the neck—to conjure
Halt, *pa. t.* of hold, *v. Sax.* held or kept
Halt, for Holt, *i. e.* holdeth, *Du.* 622.
Halte, *v. Fr.* to go lamely, *Du.* 622.
Hame, for home, *n. Sax.*
Hamele, *v. Sax.* to hamſtring, to cut off
Hamers, *n. pl. Sax.* hammers, *Du.* 1164.
Han, *inf. m.* of have, *v. Sax.*
Hanſelines, appears from the context to mean a ſort of breeches
Happe, *n. Sax.* chance
Happe, *v.* to happen
Hard, *adj. Sax.* hard; harde grace, misfortune. See Grace. It is uſed adverbially
Harde, *v. Sax.* to make hard
Hardely, (hardily) *adv. Fr.* boldly, *adv. Sax.* certainly
Harding, *n. Sax.* hardening
Harie, *v. Fr.* to hurry; to harie and drawe
Haried, *part. pa.* hurried; *ils feroient hariez en grand manere. Froiſſart*, v. i. c. 225.
Harlot, *n.* was anciently applied to men as well as women
Harlotries, *n. pl.* ribaldries
Harneis, *n. Fr.* armour, furniture
Harneiſe, *v. Fr.* to dreſs
Harow, *interj.*
Harpour, *n. Fr.* a harpour. In the act of reſumption, 28 H. VI. there is a proviſo in favour of John Turges, harpour with the queen, for the reverſion of an annuity of 10 marks, after the death of William Langton minſtrel
Harwed, *p. t.* of harwe, *v. Sax.* harraſſed, ſubdued
Haſardour, *n. Fr.* a player at hazard, a gameſter
Haſardrie, *n. Fr.* gaming in general
Haſelwode. All the paſſages in which this word occurs plainly allude to the ſame proverbial ſaying, which appears to have been uſed in ſcorn or deriſion of any improbable hope or expectation; why it was ſo uſed is beyond my reach to diſcover: it may be proper, however, to mention that in T. iii. 892, mſ. *Harl.* 3943, reads—Haſelwode is ſhaken—and that the paſſage, T. v. 1174, is an imitation of the following in the Filoſtrato.

Ma Pandero feco tacitamente
Ride di cio che Troylo dicea——
Chel ſi ſuſſe ſembiante facea
Di crederlo, e dicia, *di munzibelo*
Aſpetta il vento queſto tapinello.

Haſtif, *adj. Fr.* haſty
Haſtifly, *adv.* haſtily
Hate, *v. Sax.* to be named
Hauberk, *n. Fr.* a coat of mail
Haunce, *v. Fr.* to raiſe, to enhance
Haunt, *n. Fr.* cuſtom, practice
Haunte, *v. Fr.* to practiſe
Haunteden, *pa. t. pl.* practiſed, frequented
Hautein, *adj. Fr.* haughty, loud, a hautein faucon, a highflying hawk, faulcon haultain, *Fr.*
Haven, *inf. m.* of have, *v. Sax.*; it is more commonly abbreviated into han
Havoir, for avoir, *n. Fr.* wealth
Hawe, *n. Sax.* a hawthorn berry, a farmyard—a churchyard
He, *pron. Sax.* is often prefixed in all its caſes to proper names emphatically, according to the Saxon uſage; he Moſes, he Tityus. *Hit* is alſo frequently uſed for *it* in all caſes
Hed, *n. Sax.* head; on his hed, on pain of loſing his head
Hedde, *for* hidde, (hidden)
Hegges, *n. pl. Sax.* hedges
Heiſugge, curruca, a little bird which is ſuppoſed to hatch the cukoo's egg, and to be deſtroyed by the young cukoos, *Sp.*
Hele, *v. Sax.* helan, to hide
Hele, *v. Sax.* hælan, to heal, to help
Hele, *n. Sax.* health
Heleles, *adj.* helpleſs
Helife, *pr. n.* Elyſium
Helmed, *part. pa. Fr.* armed with an helmet
Helowis, *pr. n.* Eloiſa the miſtreſs of Abelard—See a ſummary of their hiſtory in *Rom. de la Roſe*
Hem, *obl. c. pl.* of he, them. See Him
Hemſelf, hemſelve, hemſelven. See Self
Henchmen, *n. pl.* pages. See a note on the Midſummer Night's Dream of Shakeſpeare, act. ii. ſc. 2. laſt edit.
Hende, hendy, *adj. Sax.* civil, courteous
Henen, henne, hennes, hens, *adv. Sax.* hence
Heng, *pa. t.* and *part.* of hang
Henneſforth, *adv. Sax.* henceforth
Hente, *v. Sax.* to take hold of, to catch
Hent, *pa. t.* & *part.*
Hepe, *n. Sax.* a heap; to hepe; together, in a heap—the fruit of the dogroſe
Heraud, *n. Fr.* a herald
Herbergage, *n. Fr.* lodging
Herbergeours, *n. pl. Fr.* providers of lodgings, harbingers
Herberwe, *n. Sax.* an inn, a lodging—the place of the ſun: it rather means, I think, a harbour—herber, an arbour
Herberwe, *v. Sax.* to lodge
Herd, hierde, *n. Sax.* a keeper—herdegromes, ſhepherd-boys
Herdes, *n. pl.* coarſe flax; herde, fibra lini, *Kilian*

That not of hempe ne heerdis was.

So this ver. is written in mſ. *Hunter*; the orig. has only—*elle ne fut de bourras*
Here, for hire, *pron.*
Here, *adv. Sax.* in this place
Here, in compoſition, ſignifies this, without including any idea of place; hereagaines, againſt this; herebeforn, before this
Here, *v. Sax.* to hear—Herd, herde, *pa. t.* & *part.* Herden, *pa. t. pl.*
Here, *n. Sax.* hair
Heren, *adj.* made of hair
Herking, *part. pr.* of herke, *v. Sax.* hearkening
Hermes, *pr. n.* a chymical treatiſe under his name is extant in the *Theat. Chemic.* t. iv. See *Fabr. Bibl. Gr.* l. i. c. 10. *Hermes Ballenus*, whether a different perſon from him juſt mentioned, I cannot tell
Herne, *n. Sax.* a corner

Heronere, *n. Fr.* a hawk made to fly only at the heron
Heronſewes, *n. pl. Fr.* young herons
Herte, for hurt, *v. Sax. Du.* 383
Herte, *n. Sax.* heart; herteblood, heart's blood; herte-ſpone
Herteles, *adj.* without courage
Hertly, *adj.* hearty
Hery, *v. Sax.* to praiſe
Herying, *n.* praiſe
Heſte, *n. Sax.* command—promiſe
Het, hette, *pa. t.* of hete, *v. Sax.* heated.
Hete, *v. Sax.* to promiſe, to be called, *Du.* 200 See Highte
Hethenneſſe, *n. Sax.* country of heathens
Hething, *n. Sax.* contempt, all is thy hething fallen upon thee
Heve, *v. Sax.* to heave, to raiſe—*v. neut.* to labour
Heved, *n. Sax.* head; everv virtue in my heved; ſo I apprehend this line ſhould be read, inſtead of in me heved
Heven-quene, *n. Sax.* the queen of heaven, the Virgin Mary
Hew of Lincoln, *pr. n.*
Hewe, *v. Sax.* to cut—*v. neut.* he that heweth to hie, with chippes he may leſe his ſight; ſo in the *Conf. Am.*

Full ofte he heweth up ſo hye,
That chyppes fallen in his eye.

Hewe, *n. Sax.* colour, appearance
Hewed, *part. pa.* coloured
Hext, *adj. ſuperl. Sax.* higheſt; hegh, hegheſt heghſt, hext. In the ſame manner next is formed from negh
Hidous, *adj. Fr.* dreadful
Hidouſly, *adv.* terribly
Hie, *v. Sax.* to haſten
Hie, *n.* haſte, diligence; in or on hie, in haſte
Hie, highe, *adj. Sax.* high
Hierdeſſe, *n. Sax.* a ſhepherdeſs. See Herde
Highen is perhaps miſwritten for highe
Hight, *n. Sax.* heighth, on hight ſeems to ſignify —aloud, in a high voice; *en haut, Fr.*
Highte, *v. Sax.* called
Him, *obl. c.* of he, is often uſed alone in that reciprocal ſenſe, which is generally expreſſed by the addition of the adj. ſelf; than hath he don his frend ne him no ſhame, *i. e.* nor himſelf; as he him laid; and clad him; and bare him.—It is alſo frequently put without the uſual preposition; him to grete ſhame; to great ſhame of him; ſhe falleth him to fete, ſhe falleth at the feet of him; ſhe ſwore him, ſhe ſwore to him: hem and hire are uſed in the ſame manner
Himſelf, himſelve, himſelven. See Self
Hindereſt, *ſuperl. d.* of hind, *adv. Sax.* hindmoſt
Hine, *n Sax.* a ſervant in huſbandry, a hind
Hine, *n. Bal. Vil.* 35, ſhould probably be hiene: the gall of an hyena was uſed to cure a certain diſorder of the eye, *Plin. N. H.* l. xxix. c. 38.
Hippocras, *pr. n.* Hippocrates
Hir, *pron. poſſ. Sax.* their
Hire, *obl. c.* of ſhe, *pron. Sax.* is often put for herſelf, and without the uſual preposition. See Him
Hire, *pron. poſſ. Sax.* her
Hireſelf, hireſelve, hireſelven. See Self
Hirs, *pron. poſſ. Sax.* theirs
Hiſtorial, *adj. Fr.* hiſtorical
Ho, *interj. Fr.* commanding a ceſſation of any action
Hochepot, *s. Fr.* a mixture of various things ſhaken together in the ſame pot
Hoker, *n. Sax.* frowardneſs
Hokerly, *adv.* frowardly
Hold, *n. Sax.* a fort or caſtle
Hold, *v. Sax.* to keep; to hold in honde, to keep in ſuſpenſe; to amuſe in order to deceive
Hold, holden, *part. pa.* obliged
Hole, hol, *adj. Sax.* entire, whole, ſound
Holly, *adv.* entirely, wholly
Holour, *n. Sax.* a whoremonger
Holt, *n. Sax.* a grove or foreſt
Holt, for holdeth
Homly, *adj. Sax.* domeſtic—plain, ſimple
Homlineſſe, *n. Sax.* domeſtic management, familiarity
Honde, *n. Sax.* a hand; an honde-brede, an hand's breadth; withouten honde, without being pulled by any hand—Honden, *pl.*
Honeſt, *adj. Fr.* means generally, according to the French uſage, creditable, honourable, becoming a perſon of rank
Honeſtetee, honeſtee, *n. Fr.* virtue, decency—good manners
Hong, *v. Sax.* to hang
Hont, *n. Sax. Du.* 385, as hunt
Hony-ſwete, *adj. Sax.* ſweet as honey
Hope, *v. Sax.* to expect
Hoppeſteres, *n. pl. Sax.* dancers
Hord, *n. Sax.* treaſure—a private place fit for the keeping of treaſure
Hore, hoor, *adj. Sax.* hoary, gray
Horowe, *adj. Sax.* foul
Horriblete, *n. Fr.* horribleneſs
Hors, *n. pl. Sax.* horſes
Horſe, *adj. Sax.* hoarſe, *Du.* 347.
Horſly, *adj.* is applied to a horſe, as manly is to a man
Hoſpitalers, *n. pl. Lat.* religious perſons of both ſexes who attended the ſick in hoſpitals—knights Hoſpitalers of different orders. See *Du Cange* in v. *Hoſpitalarius*
Hoſt, *n. Fr.* an army
Hoſtelere, *n. Fr.* an innkeeper
Hoſtelrie, *n. Fr.* an inn or lodging-houſe
Hoſtilements, *n. pl.* houſehold furniture
Hote, *adj. Sax.* hot
Hote, hoten, *part. pa.* of hete, called
Hove, *v. Sax.* to hover
Hound-fiſh, *n. Sax.* the dog-fiſh
Houne, *n.* for hound, thus ſaid both here and houne, *i. e.* hate and hound, all ſorts of people
Houped, *pa. t. Fr.* hooped or hollowed
Houſel, *n. Sax.* the euchariſt
Houſel, *v.* to adminiſter the ſacrament—to be houſeled, to receive the ſacrament
Howve, *n. Sax.* a cap or hood
Hulfere, *n. Sax.* holly
Hulſtred, *part. pa. Sax.* hidden
Humblehede, *n. Sax.* humble ſtate

Humbleſſe, *n. Fr.* humility
Humbling, *n.* a humming; *bommelen bombilari, bombum edere, Kilian;* hence our humble-bee
Hunt, *n. Sax.* a huntſman
Hurtle, *v. Fr.* to puſh
Huſbandrie, *n. Sax.* thriſt, economical management
Huſbond-man, *n. Sax.* the maſter of the family
Huſt, *adj. Sax.* ſilent, whiſt
Hylde, *v. Sax.* to pour
Hylled, *part. pa. Sax.* hidden. See Hele,

I.

I, at the beginning of a word, in the common edit. and even the mſ. of Chaucer, is often uſed to expreſs a corruption of the Saxon prepoſitive particle Ge, which in this edit. of The Canterbury Tales, is always expreſſed by *y*; all ſuch words therefore occurring in the Works of Chaucer not contained in this edition, ſhould be looked for either under *y* or under their ſecond letters
Jacobin, *pr. n.* a gray frier
Jacke Straw, *pr. n.* the noiſe made by the followers of this rebel, to which our Author alludes, he had probably heard himſelf; it is called by Walſingham, p. 251; "Clamor horrendiſſimus, "non ſimilis clamoribus quos edere ſolent homines, ſed qui ultra omnem æſtimationem "ſuperaret omnes clamores humanos, et maxi-"me poſſet aſſimulari ululatibus infernalium "incolarum." Many Flemings *(Flandrenſes)* were beheaded by the rebels *cum clamore conſueto. Walſingham*, ibid.
Jambeaux, *n. pl. Fr.* boots, armour for the legs
Jane, *n.* a coin of *(Janua)* Genoa; it is put for any ſmall coin
Jangle, *v. Fr.* to prate, to talk much or faſt
Jangle, *n.* prate, babble
Jangler, janglour, *n.* a prater
Janglereſſe, *n.* a female prater
Jape, *n. Sax.* a trick, a jeſt
Jape, *v.* to jeſt—to cheat, to laugh at
Japer, *n.* a common jeſter or buffoon
Japerie, *n.* buffoonery
Jape-worthy, *adj.* ridiculous
Ich, iche, *pron. Sax.* I. ſo the ich, ſo the iche, ſo may I proſper
Idel, *adj. Sax.* idle, fruitleſs; in idel, in vain
Idolaſtre, *n. Fr.* an idolater
Jeopard, *v.* to hazard, to put in danger
Jeopardie, *n.* danger
Jeoperdiſe, *Du.* 666.
Jeremie, *pr. n.* Jeremiah
Jerome, *pr. n.* Our Author has made much uſe of a treatiſe of St. Jerome *contra Jovinianum*
Jeſtes, *n. pl.* as geſtes
Jewerie, *n. Fr.* a diſtrict inhabited by Jews
Jewiſe, *n.* judgment, puniſhment; it may have been formed by corruption either of the Lat. *judicium* or the Fr. *juſtice*
Ik, *pron. Sax.* I. See Ich
Ilion, *pr. n.* the citadel of Troy
Ilke, *adj. Sax.* ſame
Imaginatif, *adj. Fr.* ſuſpicious
Imped, *part. pa. Sax.* planted
Impes, *n. pl. Sax.* ſhoots of trees
Impetren, *pr. t. pl. Fr.* obtain by prayer
Importable, *adj. Fr.* intolerable—impoſſible
Importune, *adj. Fr.* troubleſome
Impoſſible, *adj Fr.* uſed as a ſubſtantive
In, *prep. Sax.* upon, in with, within
Incombrous, *adj. Fr.* cumberſome
Inconſtance, *n. Fr.* inconſtancy
Inde, *adj. Fr.* azure-coloured
Indigne, *adj. Fr.* unworthy
Ineched, *part. pa. Sax.* inſerted
Inequal, *adj. Fr.* unequal
Infortunat, *adj. Lat.* unfortunate
Infortune, *n. Fr.* misfortune
Ingot, *n.* a mould for caſting ingots
Inhabit, *part. pa. Fr.* inhabited
Inhilde, *v. Sax.* to pour in. See Hylde
Injure, *n. Fr.* injury
Inly, *adv. Sax.* inwardly, deeply, thoroughly
Inne, *prep. Sax.* in
Inne, in, *n. Sax.* a houſe, habitation, lodging
Inned, *part. pa. Sax.* lodged
Innereſte, *adj. ſup. Sax.* inmoſt
Innocent, *adj. Fr.* ignorant
Inſeled, *part. pa. Fr.* atteſted under ſeal
Inſet, *part. pa. Sax.* implanted
Interminable, *adj. Fr.* infinite
Inwitte, *n. Sax.* underſtanding
Joce, *pr. n.* or Joſſe—Sanctus Judocus was a ſaint of Ponthieu. *Vocab. Hagiol.* prefixed to Menage, *Etymol. Fr.*
Joconde, *adj. Fr.* joyous, pleaſant
Jogelour, *n. Fr.* a juggler
Joinant, *part. pr. Fr.* joining
Joine, *v. Fr.* to enjoin
Jolie Robin, the name of a dance, *de la danſe le Beau Robin*, orig.
Jolif, *adj. Fr.* jolly, joyful
Jombre, *v.* to jumble
Jonglerie, *n.* ſhould rather be janglerie, idle talk. See Jangle
Joſſa, *interj.* ſeems to be partly formed from the Fr. *ea*, come hither
Jovis, *pr. n.* Jupiter
Journee, *n. Fr.* a day's journey, a day's work
Jouſtes, *n. pl. Fr.* juſts
Joweles, *n. pl. Fr.* jewels
Joye, *v. Fr.* to enjoy
Ipocras, *n. Fr.* wine mixed with ſpices and other ingredients, ſo named, becauſe it is ſtrained through a woollen cloth called *the ſleeve of Hippocrates.* See Clarre
Ire, *n. Fr.* anger
Irous, *adj.* paſſionate
Iſaude, *pr. n.* See Belle Iſaude—She is called *Yſeut* by Bernard da Ventador, mſ. *Croiſs*, fol. 67;

Tant trag pena d'amor,
Q'anc *Triſtan* l'amador
Non ſofret maior dolor
Per *Yſeut la blanda.*

And ſo in *Fabliaux*, &c. t. i. p. 242; *Yſeut la blonde.* Petrarch calls her *Iſotta, Triſtano e Amore*, iii. 82. A late French writer, in wha he has been pleaſed to ſtyle *Hiſtoire literaire d*

Troubadours, [t. ii. p. 323,] having quoted a paſſage celebrating the love of Triſtan à Iſault, adds very coolly—*C'eſt une alluſion à* quelque *Roman*; which is juſt as if a commentator upon Ovid ſhould ſay of the epiſtle from Paris to Helen, that it alludes to ſome Greek ſtory

It, *pron. 3d perſ. neut. gend. Sax.* is uſed inſtead of he and ſhe

Itaille, *pr. n.* Italy

Jubaltare, *pr. n.* Gibraltar

Jubbe, *n.* a veſſel for holding ale or wine

Judicum, the book of Judges; ſo *Metamorphoſeos* is put for the Metamorphoſis of Ovid, and *Eneidos* for the Æneis of Virgil

Juge, *n. Fr.* a judge

Juil, *pr. n.* the month of July

Julian, *pr. n.*

Jupardie, *n.* as jeopardie

Jupartie, *n. Fr.* jeopardy

Juſtice, *n. Fr.* a judge

Juſtinian, *pr. n.* The law referred to is in the Code, l. xi. tit. 25, *De medicantibus validis*

Juvenal, *pr. n.* the Roman ſatiriſt

K.

Kalender, *n. Lat.* a calendar, a guide or director

Kalendes, *n. pl. Lat.* the firſt day of the month, the beginning of any thing

Kaynard, *n.* a term of reproach

Kele, *v. Sax.* to cool

Kembed, kemped, *part. pa. Sax.* combed

Kemelin, *n. Sax.* a tub

Kenelm, *pr. n.* See his life in all the edit. of the Engliſh Golden Legend

Kepe, *n. Sax.* care, attention

Kepe, *v.* to take care

Kerchef, *n.* a corruption of coverchief

Kernels, *n. pl. Fr.* battlements

Kers, *n. Sax.* watercreſſes; of paramours ne raught he not a kers, he cared not a ruſh for love: creſſe is uſed in the ſame ſenſe

Kerver, *n. Sax.* a carver

Keſſe, *v. Sax.* to kiſs

Keſte, *pa. t.* kiſſed

Ketche, *v.* T. iii. as cacche

Kevere, *v. Fr.* to cover, it ſignifies to cover

Kichel, *n. Sax.* a little cake

Kid, kidde, *pa. t. & part.* of kithe, made known, diſcovered

Kike, *v. Sax.* to kick

Kin, *n. Sax.* kindred; by my fader kin, by my father's kindred

Kin, *adj.* of the ſame nature

Kind, *n. Sax.* nature

Kindly, *adv.* naturally

Kinrede, *n.* kindred

Kirtel, *n. Sax.* a tunick or waiſtcoat, in kirtels and none other wede; *qui ſçoient en pure* cottes, orig.

Kithe, *v. Sax.* to ſhew, to make known, ne kithe hire jalouſie, nor ſhew to her any jealouſy

Kithed, *part. pa.* See Kid

Kitte, *pa. t. Sax.* cut

Knakkes, *n. pl. Sax.* trifling tricks: the word ſeems to have been formed from the knacking or ſnapping of the fingers uſed by jugglers. See *Cotg.* in v. *Mataſſinar des mains* and *Niques*—— trifling words, p. 215

Knappe, *n.* a ſhort ſleep, a nap

Knarry, *adj. Sax.* full of gnarres or knots

Knave, *n. Sax.* a ſervant, properly a boy-ſervant—a knave-child, a male child—this boie knave, *ce garçon*, orig.

Knedde, *part. pa.* of knede, *v. Sax.* kneaded

Kneen, knene, *n. pl. Sax.* knees

Knet, *part. pa.* as knit

Knight, *n. Sax.* a ſervant, generally a ſervant in war, a ſoldier—a dubbed knight

Knighthode, *n.* valour

Knit, *part. pa. Sax.* joined, bound—agreed

Knobbes, *n. pl. Sax.* excreſcencies in the ſhape of buds or buttons. See Knoppe

Knoppe, *n. Sax.* a button—a roſebud

Knopped, *part. pa.* buttoned, faſtened

Knotte, *n. Sax.* a knot: in ſome inſtances it is uſed in the ſenſe of *noeud, Fr.* for the chief point or head of a matter

Knotteles, *adj. Sax.* without a knot, without any thing to obſtruct or retard the paſſage

Knowe, for knee

Knowleche, *v. Sax.* to acknowledge

Knowleching, *n.* knowledge

Konning, *n.* as conning, cunning

Kyke, *v. Sax.* to look ſteadfaſtly; kijcken, Teut. *ſpectare*, Kilian

L.

Labbe, *n.* a blab, a great talker

Labbing, *part. pr.* blabbing

Laced, *part. pa. Fr.* tied, bound

Lacert, *n. Fr.* a fleſhy muſcle, ſo termed from its having a tail like a lizard

Lache, *adj. Fr.* ſluggiſh

Lacheſſe, *n. Fr.* ſlackneſs, negligence

Lad, ladde, *pa. t.* of lede, *v. Sax.* led, carried

Laft, *pa. t. & part.* of leve, *v. Sax.* left

Laie, *n.* T. i. as lay

Laied, *part. pa.* of lay, *v. Sax.*; with orfreys laied, *i. e.* trimmed: ſo this word is frequently uſed by Hollinſhed, vol. iii. p. 1317; laid with gold lace—laid on with red ſilke and gold lace—laid about with ſilver lace. See Couched

Laine, *inf. v. Sax.* to lay

Lainers, *n. pl. Fr.* ſtraps or thongs

Lake, *n.* it is difficult to ſay what ſort of cloth is meant; laeken, *Belg.* ſignifies both linen and woollen cloth, *Kilian*

Lakke, *n. Sax.* a fault, a diſgraceful action, want

Lakke, *v.* to find fault, to blame

Lamben, *n. pl. Sax.* lambs

Langure, *v. Fr.* to languiſh

Lapidaire, a treatiſe on precious ſtones ſo entitled; probably a French tranſlation of the Latin poem of Marbodus *De Gemmis*, which is frequently cited by the name of *Lapidarius*, *Fabric. Bibl. Med. Æt.* in v. *Marbodus*

Lappe, *n. Sax.* a ſkirt or lappet of a garment

Large, *adj. Fr.* ſpacious, free, prodigal; at large, at liberty; til that was prime large, till prime was far ſpent

Largely, *adv.* fully

Las, *n. Fr.* a lace—a ſnare

Laſſe, las, *adj. comp. Sax.* leſs
Latche, *n.* as las
Lated, *part. pa. Sax.* delayed
Lathe, *n.* a barn; it is ſtill uſed in Lincolnſhire, *St.* In. F. iii where the edit. have rathe and farhe, the mſſ. give the true reading—lathe
Laton, *n. Fr.* a kind of mixed metal of the colour of braſs
Laude, *n. Lat.* praiſe
Laudes, the ſervice performed in the fourth or laſt watch of the night; "dicuntur autem lau- "des, quod illud officium laudem præcipue "ſonat divinam," &c. *Du Cange* in v *Laus* 2 The ſame ſervice was often called Matins. *Idem* in v. *Matutini*
Laved, *part. pa. Fr.* drawn; ſpoken of water taken out of a well
Lavender, *n. Fr.* a waſherwoman or laundreſs. In the paſſage of *Dante* which is here quoted, Envy is called

La meretrice, che mai dall' oſpizio
Di Ceſare non torſe gli occhi putti,
Morte commune, e delle corte vizio.
Inf. xiii. 64.

Laverock, *n. Sax.* a lark
Launcegay, *n.* a ſort of launce
Launcelot du Leke, an eminent knight of the Round Table, whoſe adventures were the ſubject of a romance begun by Chreſtien de Troyes, one of the oldeſt of the romance poets, and finiſhed by Godefrois de Leigni. See *Fauchet*, l. ii. c. 10, 11. They have been repeatedly printed in French proſe, and make a conſiderable part of the compilation called *Mort d' Arthur*: his accompliſhments as a courtier and a man of gallantry have been alluded to before. Signor Volpi, in his notes upon Dante, *Inf.* v. 128, has moſt unaccountably repreſented Lancilotto as *inamorato di Ginevra, moglie del Re Marco*. If there be any faith in hiſtory, Ginevra was the wife of King Arthur. The ſtory in Dante, which is the occaſion of Signor Volpi's note, is a curious one; it is alluded to by Petrarch, *Trionfo d' Amore*, iii. 82;

Vedi Ginevra, Iſotta, e l' altre amanti,
E *la coppia d' Arimino*.——

Launde, *n. Fr.* a plain not ploughed
Lavoures, *n. pl. Fr.* lavers
Laureat, *adj. Lat.* crowned with Laurel
Laureole, *n. Fr.* ſpurge-laurel
Laurer, *n.* laurel
Laus, *adj. Sax.* looſe; laus, Iſland. *ſolutus*. This is the true original of that termination of adjectives ſo frequent in our language in les or leſs. *Conſuetud. de Beverly*, mſ. *Harl.* 560. "Hujus "ſacrilegii emenda non erat determinata, ſed "dicebatur ab Anglis Botalaus, i. e. *ſine emen-* "*dâ*." So Chaucer uſes boteles, and other words of the ſame form, as dotteles, drinkeles, gilteles, &c.
Lawe, *adj.* for low
Laxatif, *n. Fr.* a purging medicine
Lay, *n. Sax.* law, religious profeſſion
Lay, *n. Fr.* a ſpecies of poem
Lay, *pa. t.* of lie, or layge layen, *pl.*
Lazar, *n. Fr.* a leper
Leche, *n. Sax.* a phyſician; leche-craft, the ſkill of a phyſician
Leche, *v.* to heal
Lecherous, *adj.* provoking lechery
Lechour, *n. Fr.* a lecher
Lectorne, *n. Lat.* a reading-deſk
Leden, *n. Sax.* language
Ledge, *v.* as allege
Lees, *n. Fr.* a leaſh by which dogs are held
Lees, *adj. Sax.* falſe; withouten lees, without lying, truly
Leſe, *adj. Sax.* pleaſing, agreeable; al be him lothe or leſe, though it be unpleaſing to him or pleaſing—for leſe ne lothe, for friend nor enemy; he turned not—for leve ne for lothe. It ſometimes ſignifies pleaſed; I n'am not leſe to gabbe, I am not pleaſed to prate, I take no pleaſure in prating
Leful', *adj.* lawful
Legge, *v. Sax.* to lay
Legge, *v. Fr.* to eaſe, as alege
Lege, *v. Sax.* to lay
Leiſer, *n. Fr.* leiſure, opportunity
Leite, *n. Sax.* light; thonder-leite, lightning
Leke, *n. Sax.* a leek; it is put for any thing of very ſmall value
Lemes, *n. pl. Sax.* flames
Lemman, *n. Sax.* a lover or gallant, a miſtreſs
Lendes, *n. pl. Sax.* the loins
Lene, *adj. Sax.* lean
Lene, *v. Sax.* to lend, to grant
Lenger, *adv. comp. Sax.* longer
Lente, *pa. t.* of lene
Lenton, *n. Sax.* the ſeaſon of Lent
L'envoy, *Fr.* was a ſort of poſtſcript ſent with poetical compoſitions, and ſerving either to recommend them to the attention of ſome particular perſon, or to enforce what we call the moral of them. The ſix laſt ſtanzas of The Clerkes Tale are in many mſſ. entitled *L'envoy de Chaucer à les mariz de notre temps*. See alſo the ſtanzas at the end of The Complaint of the Black Knight, and of Chaucer's Dreme
Leon, *n. Lat.* a lion
Leonine, *adj.* belonging to a lion
Leopart, lepart, *n. Fr.* a leopard
Leos, *n. Gr.* people
Lepande, *part. pr.* of lepe, *v. Sax.* leaping
Lepe, lep, for lepeth, *3d perſ. ſing.*
——for leped, *pa. t.*
Lepe, *pr. n.* a town in Spain
Lere, lerne, *v. Sax.* to learn, to teach—Lered, *p. t.* & *part.*
Lere, *n. Sax.* the ſkin
Leſe, *n. Fr.* as lees; in luſtie leſe, in love's leaſh
Leſe, *adj. Sax.* as lees
Leſe, *v. Sax.* to leſe
Leſeth, *2d perſ. pl. imp. m.* loſe ye
Leſing, *n. Sax.* a lie, a falſity
Leſinges, *pl.*
Leſt, liſt, luſt, *n. Sax.* pleaſure
Leſte, liſte, luſte, *v.* to pleaſe; it is generally uſed as an imperſonal, in the third perſon only, for it pleaſeth or it pleaſed; him luſte to ride ſo, it pleaſed him to ride ſo; wel to drink us leſte, it pleaſed us well to drink; if you leſt, if it pleaſe you; me liſt not play, it pleaſeth me not to play

Leſte, *adj. Sax. ſuperl. d.* leaſt, at the leſte way, at the leſte, at leaſt
Leſte, for laſt
Let, *v. Sax.* to leave, to omit; to leave, to permit; let thy japes be; let the Sompnour be, to cauſe, to hinder
Lete, *pr. n.* the river Lethe
Letgame, *n. Sax.* a hinderer of pleaſure
Lette, *n.* delay, hinderance
Lettowe, *pr. n.* Lithuania
Lettred, *adj. Fr.* learned
Lettrure, letterure, *n. Fr.* literature
Lettuarie, *n. Fr.* an electuary
Leve, *v.* for live
Leve, *n. Sax.* deſire, inclination
Leve, *adj.* dear. See Leſe
Leve, *v. Sax.* to believe—Leveth, *imp. m. 2d perſ. pl.*; leveth me, believeth me; leveth is miſprinted for leſeth

He leſeth more than ye may doe.

So this verſe ſhould be written:

Plus y pert-il que vous ne faictes. Orig.

Leve is alſo miſprinted for lene
Leveles, *adj. Sax.* without leave
Leven, *n. Sax.* lightning
Lever, *comp. d.* of lefe, more agreeable; it were me lever, I hadde lever, hire hadde lever
Leveſell, *n.* a leafy ſeat, an arbour. I am by no means ſatisfied with the explanation here given of this word, the interpretation of it in the *Prompt. Parv.* will not help us much; "*Leve-cel* beforn a windowe or other place, *umbraculum.*"
Lewed, lewde, *adj. Sax.* ignorant, unlearned, laſcivious
Leye, *v. Sax.* as legge, to lay, to lay a wager
Leyes, *pr. n.* Layas in Armenia
Leyte, *n. Sax.* flame. See Leite
Liard, *pr. n.* belonged origiually to a horſe of a gray colour
Licenciat, *n. Lat.* ſeems to ſignify that he was licenſed by the Pope to hear confeſſions, &c. in all places, independently of the local ordinaries
Liche-wake, *n.* the cuſtom of watching with dead bodies
Lide, *pr. n.* Lydia
Lieges, *n. pl. Fr.* ſubjects
Lien, *pr. t. pl.* of lie or ligge
Lien, *part. pa.* of lie or ligge, lain
Lies, *n. pl. Fr.* lees of wine, &c.
Lieth is miſprinted for leveth
Liſly, *adv. Sax.* like the life
Ligeance, *n. Fr.* allegiance
Ligge, lie, *v. neut. Sax.* to lie down
Ligging, *part. pr.* lying
Light, *v. Sax.* to enlighten—to make light or pleaſant—*v. neut.* to deſcend, to alight
Ligne, *n. Fr.* lineage, lineal deſcent; higine ſhould probably be lignee, to rhyme to compagnee
Ligne aloes, lignum aloes, a very bitter drug
Like, liken, *v. Sax.* to compare
Like, *v. Sax.* to pleaſe; if you liketh, if it pleaſeth you; it liketh hem, it pleaſeth them
Likerous, *adj. Sax.* gluttonous, laſcivious
Liking, *part. pr.* pleaſing
Liking, *n.* pleaſure
Limaile, *n. Fr.* filings of any metal
Lime, *v. Sax.* to ſmear as with birdlime
Limed, *part. pa.* caught as with birdlime
Limed, *part. pa. Fr.* poliſhed as with a file
Limer, *n. Fr.* limier, a bloodhound, *Du.* 362, 5.
Lime-rod, a twig with birdlime
Limitation, *n. Lat.* a certain precinct allowed to a limitour
Limitour, *n.* a friar licenſed to beg within a certain diſtrict
Limmes, *n. pl. Sax.* limbs
Linage, *n. Fr.* family
Linde, *n Sax.* the limetree
Liſſe, *n. Sax.* remiſſion, abatement
Liſſe, *v. neut. Sax.* to grow eaſy
Liſſed, *part. pa.* of liſſe, *v. Sax.* eaſed, relieved
Liſte, *v.* See Leſte
Liſteneth, *imp. m. 3d perſ. pl.* of liſten, *v. Sax.* hearken ye
Liſtes, *n. pl. Fr.* liſts, a place encloſed for combats, &c.
Litargo, *n. Fr.* white lead
Lite, *adj. Sax.* little
Lith, *n. Sax.* a limb
Lith, for lieth
Lithe, *adj. Sax.* ſoft, flexible, *Du.* 953.
Lithe, *v. Sax.* to ſoften
Lither, *adj. Sax.* wicked; [in the edit. it is lithy,] luther and quede. See Quade
Litherly, *adv. Sax.* very ill
Litling, *Sax.* very little
Livand, *part. pr. Sax* living
Live, *n. Sax.* life; on live, in life, alive; lives creature, living creature; liives body, living body,
Lodemanage, Lodeſterre, } See the ſtatute 3 Geo. I. c. 13, where loadmanage is uſed repeatedly in the ſenſe of pilotage
Lodeſmen, *n. pl. Sax.* pilots
Loft, *adv. Sax.* on loft, on high, aloft
Loge, *n. Fr.* a lodge, habitation
Logged, *part. pa. Fr.* lodged
Logging, *n.* lodging
Loke, *v. Sax.* to ſee, to look upon
Loken, Luke, *part. pa.* of loke, *v. Sax.* locked, ſhut cloſe, *Conf. Am.* 29, his one eye anon was loke
Loller, *n.* a lollard
Lollius, *pr. n.* a writer from whom Chaucer profeſſes to have tranſlated his poem of Troilus and Creſeide
Londe, *n. Sax.* land
Londenoys, a Londoner, one born in London
Lone, *n. Sax.* a loan, any thing lent
Long, *v. Sax.* to belong; longing for his art, belonging to his art, to deſire
Long. See Along
Loos, los, *n. Fr.* praiſe; loſes, *pl.*
Lord, *n. Sax.* a title of honour given to monks, as well as to other perſons of ſuperiour rank; lordes is uſed in the ſenſe of lordings
Lordings, *n. pl.* ſirs, maſters, a diminutive of lords
Lordſhip, *n. Sax.* ſupreme power
Lore, *n. Sax.* knowledge, doctrine, advice
Lorel, *n. Sax.* a good-for-nothing fellow. Skinner ſuppoſes it to be derived from the Lat.

lurco; and in the *Promptorium Parvulorum lofel*, or *lorel*, or *lurden*, is rendered *lurco*; but *lurco*, I apprehend, ſignifies only a glutton, which falls very ſhort of our idea of a lorel: and beſides, I do not believe that the word was ever ſufficiently common in Latin to give riſe to a derivative in Engliſh. One of Skinner's friends deduces it with much more probability from the Belg. [rather Sax.] loren, loſt, *perditus*

Lorne, *part. pa.* of leſe, *v. Sax.* loſt, undone

Los, *n. Sax.* loſs

Loſed, *part. pa. Sax.* looſed

Loſed, *part. pa. Fr.* praiſed

Loſenge, *n. Fr.* a quadrilateral figure of equal ſides but unequal angles, in which the arms of women are uſually painted; loſynges ſeems to ſignify ſmall figures of the ſame form in the fret-work of a crown

Loſengeour, *n. Fr.* a flatterer

Loteby, *n.* in the orig. *campaigne*, a private companion or bedfellow; the concubines of prieſts are called their lotebies; perhaps it may be derived from the Sax. loute, to lurk

Loth, *adj. Sax.* diſagreeable, odious

Lother, *comp. d.* more hateful

Lotheſt, *ſuperl. d.* moſt unwilling

Lothly, *adj.* loathſome

Love-dayes, *n. pl.* a day appointed for the amicable ſettlement of differences, was called a love-day

Love-drinke, *n. Sax.* a drink to excite love

Love-longing, *n. Sax.* deſire of love

Loveſome, *adj. Sax.* lovely

Lough, *pa. t.* of laugh, *v. Sax.* laughed

Louke. In *Pierce Plough.* 20, wrong is called a wicked luſke, and I learn from Cotgrave, that luſke is a ſynonymous word to lowt, lorel, &c.; ſo that perhaps louke may be ſtill another term for an idle good-for-nothing fellow. See *Cotg.* in *v. Luſke, Eng.* and in *v. Loricard, Falourdin, Fr.*

Loure, *v. neut. Sax.* to look diſcontented

Louring, *part. pr.*

Loute, *v. Sax.* to bow, to lurk

Low, *n.* for law

Lowlyhede, *n. Sax.* humility

Lucan, *pr. n.* the Roman poet

Luce, *n. Lat.* the fiſh called a pike

Lucina, *pr. n.* the moon

Lulled, *pa. t.* of lull. *v. Sax.* invited to ſleep

Lumbardes, *n pl.* bankers, remitters of money

Lunarie, *pr. n.* of a herb, moonwort

Lure, *n. Fr.* a device uſed by falconers for calling their hawks

Lure, *v. Fr.* to bring to the lure

Luſſheburghes, baſe coins, probably firſt imported, as Skinner thinks, from Luxembourgh. They are mentioned in the Stat. 25. E. III. c. 2. "La monoie appellé Lucynbourg," and in *Pierce Plough.* fol. 82. b.

> As in Luſhburgh is a luther alay, yet loketh like Sterling.

Luſt, *n.* See Leſt

Luſte, *v.* See Leſte

Luſtyhede, *n. Sax.* pleaſure, mirth

Luxurie, *n. Fr.* lechery

Lynian, *pr. n.* a learned correſpondent, to whom I am obliged for other uſeful hints, has ſuggeſted to me that Fabricius, upon the authority of Ghilini, has placed the death of Joannes Lignanus in 1383, *Bibl. Med. Æt.* in v. This furniſhes an additional reaſon for believing that The Canterbury Tales were compoſed, or at leaſt collected into a body, after that period

M.

Mace, *n. Fr.* a club

Machabe, *pr. n.* the books of the Maccabees

Macrobes, *pr. n.* Macrobius, *Du.* 284; the author of the commentary on the Somnium Scipionis of Cicero

Madde, *v. Sax.* to be mad

Madrian. I have found that the French have a ſaint called Materne—but Mr. Steevens, with much more probability, ſuppoſes that the precious body by which the Hoſt ſwears was that of St. Mathurin. See his ſtory in The Golden Legende, edit. 1527, by Winkin de Worde, 151, b.: "Than toke they *the precious body*, "and enoynted it with moche reverence; and "when they had laid it in the erth, on the "morowe they came to the ſepulture and "found *the holy body* above the erth nigh un-"to the ſame ſepulture, and than were they "all abaſhed, and wyſt not what to do." It ſeems the knights who had brought him out of France had promiſed that if he died on his journey he ſhould be ſent back and buried "where as they had taken him," and therefore his body would not ſtay in the ground till it was depoſited, according to promiſe, in France, where it afterwards worked many miracles

Maſcie, *Fr. ma foy*, by my faith

Magicien, *n. Fr.* a magician

Magike, *n. Fr.* magic; magike, natural

Mahownd, *pr. n.* Mahomet. See *Du Cange* in v.

Maille, *n. Fr.* a coat of mail

Mainte, *part. pa.* as meint

Maintenance, *n. Fr.* behaviour, *Du.* 834.

Maiſondewe, *Fr.* maiſondieu, an hoſpital

Maiſter, *n. Fr.* a ſkilful artiſt, a maiſter; maiſter-ſtrete, the chief ſtreet; maiſter-temple, the chief temple; maiſter-tour, the principal tower

Maiſterful, *adj.* imperious

Maiſterie, maiſtrie, *n. Fr.* ſkill, ſkilful management, power, ſuperiority

> Love wol not be conſtreined by maiſtrie.
> Whan maiſtrie cometh the god of love anon
> Beteth his winges, and farewell he is gon.

I cite theſe elegant lines as I omitted to obſerve before that Spenſer has inſerted them in the Faery Queen, b. ii. c. 1, ſt. 25, with very little alteration, and certainly without any improvement:

> Ne may love be compell'd by maſtery,
> For ſoon as maſtery comes ſweet love anone
> Taketh his nimble wings, and ſoon away is gone.

A maiſtrie, a maſterly operation; *un coup de maitre*, for the maiſtrie

Maiſtreſſe, *n. Fr.* miſtreſs, governeſs

Maistrise, *n. Fr.* masterly workmanship

Make, *n. Sax.* a fellow, a mate, a husband, a wife; make or metche, compar. *Prompt. Parv.*

Make, *v. Sax.* to compose or make verses, to solace him sometimes as I do whan I make, *Pierce Plough.* 60. to make a man's berde, to cheat him

Make, why make ye your backes! we should read—nake, *i. e.* make naked; *cur inertes terga nudatis?* orig.

Maked, *part. pa.* made

Makeles, *adj. Sax.* peerless, without a fellow

Making, *n.* poetry; makinges, *pl.* poetical compositions; and thou medlest with makings, *Pierce Plough.* 60.

Malapert, *adj.* pert, forward; the word seems to be evidently of French original, though I do not recollect to have seen it used by any French writer. Appert, *adj. Fr.* signifies expert, &c. *Cotgrave*

Male, *n. Fr.* a budget or portmanteau

Malefice, *n. Fr.* enchantment

Male-talent, *n. Fr.* ill-will

Malison *n. Fr.* malediction, curse; I gyve it my malisoun

Malt, *pa. t.* of melt, *v. Sax.* melted

Malvesie, *pr. n.* Malmsey wine

Malure, *n. Fr.* misfortune

Manace, *n. Fr.* a threat

Manace, *v.* to threaten

Manacing, *n.* threatening

Manciple, *n.* an officer who has the care of purchasing victuals for an inn of court. The name is probably derived from the Lat. *manceps*, which signified particularly the superintendant of a public bakehouse, and from thence a baker in general. See *Du Cange* in *v. Manceps* 2. The office still subsists in several colleges as well as inns of court.

Mandement, *n. Fr.* mandate

Manere, *n. Fr.* carriage, behaviour, kind or sort; a *manere* Latin, a kind of Latin; swiche a maner love-drinke, such a sort of love-potion; swiche maner rime

Mangonel, *n. Fr.* an engine used to batter walls

Manie, *n. Fr. Gr.* madness

Manniſh, *adj. Sax.* human, proper to the human species—masculine, proper to man as distinguished from woman; in this last sense when applied to a woman it is a strong term of reproach

Manor, *n. Fr.* dwelling, *Du.* 1004.

Mansuete, *adj. Fr.* gentle

Mantelet, *n. Fr.* a short mantle

Marcian, *pr. n.* Martianus Capella

Marcian, *adj.* martial, under the influence of Mars

Mareis, *n. Fr.* a marsh

Margarite, *n. Fr.* a pearl

Marie, mary, *n. Sax.* marrow; marie-bones, marrowbones

Market-beter, I am enclined to believe that this word is to be understood in a sense similar to that in which the *Fr.* phrases *Batreles rues*—and *Bateur de pavez*, are used; *Batre les rues*, to revel, jet, or swagger, up and down the streets anights; *Bateur de pavez*, a jetter abroad in the streets—a pavement-beater. See *Cotgrave* in *v. Bateur, Batre, Pavé*, so that he was a market-beter atte full, may mean perhaps—he was used to swagger up and down the market when it was fullest—a circumstance which suits very well with the rest of his character:—*Market-dacbar, circumforaneus, Prompt. Parv.*

Markis, *n. Fr.* a marquis

Markis, for markises, *gen. ca. sing.*; in the same manner Peneus is put for Peneuses; Theseus for Theseuses; Venus for Venuses; Ceres for Cereses; Melibeus for Melibeuses: Perhaps it might have been proper to add a mark of apocope to the words so abbreviated. As to the present method of expressing the genitive cases of nouns ending in *s* by adding another *s* with a mark of syncope, as Peneus's, Theseus's, Venus's, &c. it seems absurd, whether the addition be intended to be pronounced or not. In the first case the *e* should not be cut out; in the second the *s* is quite superfluous. But the absurdity of this practice is most striking when the genitives of monosyllable nouns are thus written, an ox's horns, an ass's ears, a fish's tail, St. James's park; notwithstanding that the *e*, which is thus directed to be cut out, is constantly and necessarily to be pronounced, as if the several words were written at length, oxes, asses, fishes, Jameses

Markisesse, *n. Fr.* the wife of a marquis

Marte, *pr. n.* Mars

Martire, *n. Fr.* martyrdom, torment

Martire, *v. Fr.* to torment

Mary, Marie, *pr. n.* a vulgar oath; by Mary

Mase, *n.* a wild fancy

Mase, *v. neut.* to doubt, to be confounded

Masednesse, *n.* astonishment, confusion

Maselin, *n.* rather mazerin, a drinking-cup. See *Du Cange* in *v. Mazer*

Mate, *part. pa.* of mate, *v. Fr.* dejected, struck dead; so feble and mate, *Conf. Am.* 127, b.

Matire, for matere, *n. Fr.* matter

Maugre, malgre, *Fr.* in spite of; maugre all thy might; maugre thin eyen; maugre hire hed—The original of this expression appears more plainly in the following passages, I drede thou canst me grete maugre

> Car je cuide, que me scavez
> *Mal gré.* Orig.

Malgre his, with his ill will, against his will; *mal gré lui.*

Mavis, *n. Sax.* a thrush

Mavis is probably a mistake for muis, *n. pl. Fr.* the orig. has *cent* muys *de froment*; the Paris muid contains something more than five quarters English

Maumet, *n.* an idol

Maumetrie, *n.* the religion of Mahomet; idolatry

Mawe, *n. Sax.* the stomach

Maximian, *pr. n.* the author of six elegies which have been frequently printed under the name of Gallus: he is said by Fabricius [*Bibl. Lat.* t. i. p. 297, *ed. Patav.*] to have lived under the Emperor Anastasius, q. I. or II.? A translation or rather abridgment of these elegies in English verse is in ms. *Harl.* 2253.

May, *v. Sax.* to be able, physically, morally. See Mowe

May, *n. Sax.* a virgin; of Mary, moder and may, a young woman.

Maydenhed, *n. Sax.* virginity

Meaneliche, *adj. Sax.* moderate; *mediocribus*, orig.

Mebles, *n. pl. Fr.* moveable goods

Mede, *n. Sax.* reward, a meadow

Mede, methe, meth, *n. barb. Lat.* mead, a liquor made of honey

Medle, *v. Fr.* to mix

Medlee, *adj.* of a mixed stuff or colour

Meinie, *n. Fr.* household attendants, an army—*Harlewaynes meyne.* This obscure phrase, I think, may be understood to relate to a particular set of ghostly apparitions which were used to run about the country at night, and were called in French *La mesgnie de Hellequin* or *Herlequin.* The fullest account that I have seen of them is in *L'histoire de Richard Sans paour, Duc de Normandie, qui fut fils de Robert le Diable.* In one of his rides he meets with three black knights whom he engages: "Et quand les "Chevaliers veirent le ju mal party pour eux "ils monterent a cheval et s'enfuyrent;—et "Richard—chevaucha apres eux; et ainsi qu'il "chevauchoit il apperceut une dance de gens "noirs qui s'entretenoyent. Adonc luy sou- "vint *de la mesgnie de Hellequin*, dont il avoit "autres foys ouy parler." The title of the next chapter (4) is *Cy divise de la mesgnie de Hellequin et qui il estoit.* He is there said to have been a knight who, having spent all his substance in the wars of Charles Martel against the Saracens, lived afterwards by pillage. "Adonc il avint qu'il mourut et fut en "danger d'estre damme, mais Dieu luy fit pardon, "pource que il avoit bataille contre les Sarra- "zins et exaulce la foy. Si fut condamne de "Dieu que pour un tems de termine luy et "ceux de son lignage seroient penitence et "yroient toute la nuit parmy la terre, pour "leurs penitences faire et endurer plusieurs "maux et calamitez." The belief of such apparitions was certainly of great antiquity in Normandy, as they are mentioned by Ordericus Vitalis under the title of *familia Herlechini*, in a most extraordinary story related by him, l. viii. p. 695, *and.* 1091; and I suspect that in a passage quoted by *Du Cange* in *v. Herlinini*; from *Petr. Blesens*, ep. 14, we should read *Herlikini* instead of *Herlinini*.—Gervase of Tilbery, who wrote in 1211, mentions another set of apparitions which were called *familia Arturi. Of. Imper. Dec.* ii. c. 12; "In sylvis Brittanniæ "majoris aut minoris consimilia contigisse re- "feruntur, narrantibus nemorum custodibus, "quos *foreslarios*—vulgus nominat, se alternis "diebus circa horam meridianam, et in primo "noctium conticinio sub plenilunio lunâ lu- "cente, sæpissime videre militum copiam ve- "nantium et canum et cornuum strepitum, "qui scissitantibus se *de societate et familiâ Ar- "turi* esse affirmant." He had just said that Arthur, not long before, had been seen in a palace, *miro opere constructo*, in a most delicious valley in the neighbourhood of Mount Ætna, where he had resided ever since the time of his supposed death, *vulneribus quotannis recrudescentibus.*

Meint, *part. pa.* of menge, *v. Sax.* mixed, mingled

Meke, *adj. Sax.* meek, humble

Meke, *v.* to become meek

Meles, *n. pl. Sax.* meals, dinners, &c. *Du.* 612.

Mele-tide, *n. Sax.* dinner-time

Melle, *v. Fr.* to meddle

Melle, *n.* for mille

Memorie, *n. Fr.* remembrance; to be drawn to memorie; to be recorded;

> And for to drawe into memorye
> Her names bothe and her historye.
>
> *Conf. Am.* f. 96.

Memorie, *v.* to remember

Mendiants, *n. pl. Fr.* friars of the begging orders

Mene, *v. Sax.* to mean, to intend

Mene, *n. Fr.* moyen, a mean or instrument; where the orig. has *mezzano*, a procurer. *Menes, pl.*

Mene, *adj.* middle

Menivere, *n. Fr.* a sort of fur

Mercenrike, *pr. n.* the kingdom of Mercia

Mercia, *pr. n.* Marsayas is probably meant, but our poet, I know not upon what authority, has turned him into a female

Merciable, *adj. Fr.* merciful

Meritorie, *adj. Fr.* meritorious

Merke, *n. Sax.* a mark, an image; all the merke of Adam, all the images of Adam, all mankind

Merke, *adj. Sax.* dark

Merlion, *n. Fr. emerillon*, a merlin, a sort of hawk

Mervaille, *n. Fr.* wonder, marvel

Mery, *adj. Sax.* merry, pleasant

Mes, at gode mes, should probably be at godenes; the orig. has *en bon point.* See Godenes

Mese, *n.* for messe

Mesel, *n. Fr.* a leper

Meselrie, *n. Fr.* leprosy

Message, *n. Fr.* a messenger

Messagerie, *pr. n.* a fictitious attendant in the temple of Venus; Boccace calls her Ruffiania, *Theseida*, b. vii.

Messe, *n. Fr.* the service of the mass

Meste, *adj. Sax. superl. d.* as moste

Mesurable, *adj. Fr.* moderate

Mesure, *n. Fr.* moderation

Metamorphoseos, Metamorphosose, Ovid's Metamorphosis. See Judicum

Mete, *adj. Sax.* fitting, convenient

Mete, *n. Sax.* meat; during the metes space, during the time of eating

Mete-borde, *n. Sax.* an eating-table

Metely, *adj.* proportionable

Mete, *v. Sax.* to meet, to dream

Mette, met, *pa. t.* dreamed; I mette, me mette, I dreamed

Metriciens, *n. pl.* writers in verse

Mevable, *adj. Fr.* moveable

Mewe, *n. Fr.* a cage for hawks while they mew or change their feathers, a cage in general, or any sort of confinement; in mewe, in secret

Mewet, *adj Fr.* mute; in mewet, dumbly, speaking inwardly

Micher, *n.* a thief, lierres orig. mychin or pryvely ſtelyn ſmale things; *furripio, Prompt. Parv.*
Might, *pa. t.* of may, *v. Sax.* was able, mighten, *pl.*
Might, *part. pa.* if godely had he might, if he had been able with propriety
Might, *n. Sax.* power, ſtrength
Miſkſop, *n.* an effeminate fellow
Milne-ſtones, *n. pl. Sax.* millſtones
Minde, *n. Sax.* remembrance, *Conf. Am.* 148, as the bokes maken minde
Mine, *v. Fr.* to penetrate
Miniſtralles, *n. pl. Fr.* minſtrels
Miniſtres, *n. pl. Fr.* officers of juſtice, miniſters, minſtrels
Minoreſſe, *n.* a nun under the rule of St. Clare, *Du Cange* in v. *Minoriſſa.* It is not clear, however, why Chaucer has likened Hate to a ſiſter of this order; his original gave him no authority
Minour, *n. Fr.* a miner
Minſtralcie, *n. Fr.* muſic, muſical inſtruments
Mirrour, *n. Fr.* a lookingglaſs
Mirtheles, *adj. Sax.* without mirth
Mis, *adv.* ill, amiſs; it is often to be ſupplied to a ſecond verb, having been expreſſed in compoſition with a former; if that I miſſpeke or ſay; that hire miſdoth or ſaith; there is nothing miſſaide nor do, *Du.* 528
Mis, *n.* a wrong
Miſ-accompted, *part. pa.* miſreckoned
Miſ-aventure, *n.* misfortune
Miſ-aviſe, *v.* to adviſe wrongly
Miſ-boden, *part. pa.* of miſ-bede, injured
Miſ-borne, *part. pa.* of miſ-bere, miſbehaved
Miſchance, *n. Fr.* misfortune; with miſchance. See With
Miſcheſe, *n. Fr.* misfortune
Miſcoveting, *n.* ſhould probably be miſcompting; meſcompter, orig.
Miſ-departe, *v.* to diſtribute, wrongly
Miſericorde, *n. Fr.* mercy, pity
Miſ-eſe, *n.* uneaſineſs
Miſ-ſoryave, *pa. t.* of miſ-foryave, miſgave
Miſ-gied, *part. pa.* of miſ-gie, miſguided
Miſ-gon, Miſ-go, *part. pa.* of miſ-go, gone wrong
Miſ-happing, *part. pr.* falling amiſs
Miſ-lede, *v.* to conduct amiſs
Miſ-lived, *part. pa.* having lived to a bad purpoſe
Miſ-metre, *v.* to ſpoil the metre of verſes by writing or reading them ill
Miſ-ſate, *pa. t.* of miſ-ſit, miſbecame
Miſ-ſayde, *part. pa.* of miſ-ſaye, ill-ſpoken of
Miſ-ſayer, *n.* an evil ſpeaker
Miſſe, *v. Sax.* to fail
Miſſe-metre, *v.* See Miſ-metre
Miſtake, *v.* to take a wrong part, to tranſgreſs; meſprendre, orig.
Miſtere, *n. Fr.* trade, occupation—condition of life; what miſtere men ye ben, what kind of men ye are—need
Miſtihede, *n. Sax.* darkneſs
Miſtily, *adv. Sax.* darkly
Miſtriſt, *v.* for miſtruſt
Miſ-waie, *n.* a wrong way
Miſ-went, *part. pa.* of miſ-wende, gone amiſs
Miſ-write, *v.* to write wrong
Mitaine, *n. Fr.* a glove
Mitche, *n. Fr.* a manchet, a loaf of fine bread
Mite, *n. Sax.* a ſmall worm
Mixen, *n. Sax.* a dunghill
Mo, for me
Mo, for more, *adj. comp. adv. comp.*
Mochel, moche, *adj. Sax.* great in quantity, in number, in degree—*adv.* much, greatly
Moder, modre, *n. Sax.* mother—the matrix or principal plate of the aſtrolabe, *Aſtr.*
Moiſon, *n. Fr.* harveſt, growth
Moiſt, moiſty, *adj. Fr.* new
Mokel, *n.* may perhaps ſignify ſize, magnitude, as michel ſeems to be uſed in that ſenſe in *Pierce Plough.* 89, b. of one michel and might
Moleſtie, *n. Fr.* trouble
Molte, *pa. t.* of melte, *v. Sax* melted, *part. pa.*
Monche, *v.* to chew
Mone, *n. Sax* the moon—lamentation
Moneſte, *v. Fr.* to admoniſh
Moniours, *n. pl. Fr.* coiners: in the orig. it is *faulx monnoyeurs*
Monſtre, *n. Fr.* a monſter or prodigy—a pattern
Mood, *n. Sax.* anger
Morcels, *n. pl. Fr.* morſels
More, *adj. comp Sax.* greater in quantity, in number and degree—*adv. comp.* it is uſually joined to adjectives and adverbs to expreſs the *comp. deg.*
Mormal, *n.* a cancer or gangrene
Morter, *n. Fr.* a ſort of waxlight
Mirtifie, *v. Fr.* to kill, (ſpeaking of quickſilver)
Mortrewes, *n.* Lord Bacon, in his Nat. Hiſt. c. 48, ſpeaks of a mortreſs made with the brawn of capons ſtamped and ſtrained. He joins it with the cullice (*coulis*) of cocks. It ſeems to have been a rich broth or ſoup, in the preparation of which the fleſh was ſtamped or beat in a mortar, from whence it probably derived its name, *une mortreuſe*, though I cannot ſay that I have ever met with the French word
Morwe, *n. Sax.* the morning; in the morning of the following day—To-morwe, I believe, always means the following day, and it includes the whole day; to-morwe at night
Morwening, *n. Sax.* the morning, morweninges, *pl.*
Moſel, *n. Fr.* the muzzle, mouth of a beaſt
Moſte, *adj. ſuperl. Sax.* greateſt in quantity, in number, in degree—*adv. ſuperl.* it is uſually joined to adjectives and adverbs to expreſs the ſuperlative degree
Moſt, *v. Sax.* muſt; Moſten, *pl.*
Mote, *v. Sax.* muſt, may; Moten, *pl.*
Mote, *n. Sax.* an atom
Mothes, *n. pl. Sax.* moths
Motif, *n. Fr.* a motive, incitement
Mought, *pa. t.* of mowe, *v. Sax.* might
Moule, *v. Sax.* to grow mouldy
Mouled, *part. pa.*
Moun, for mowen, *pr. t. pl.* of mowe, *v. Sax.* may
Mountance, *n. Fr.* amount in value; in quantity; not full the mountance of a mile, *Conf. Am.* 187.
Mourdant, *n. Fr.* the tongue of a buckle
Mowe, *v. Sax.* may, to be able. Mowen, *pl.*—it is ſometimes uſed in the *inf. m.* which thou

ſhalt not mowe ſuffre, which thou ſhalt not be able to endure—to mowen ſuche a knight done live or die, to be able to make ſuch a knight to live or die—ſhe ſhould not con ne mow attaine, ſhe ſhould not know nor be able to attain

Mowe, *s. Fr.* a diſtortion of the mouth; what do I than but laugh and make a mowe? *Lydg. Tra.* 137.

Mowing, *s.* ability. In the following paſſage it ſeems to be uſed as a *gerund*; that ſhrewes weren diſpoiled of mowing to don yvel

Much, muchel. See Miche

Muckre, *v. Sax.* to heap

Mue, *v. Fr.* to change

Muet, *adj. Fr.* dumb, mute

Mullok, *s. Sax.* dung, rubbiſh

Multiplication, *s. Fr.* the art of making gold and ſilver

Multiplie, *v. Fr.* to make gold and ſilver

Muſard, *s. Fr.* a muſer or dreamer

Muſe, *v. Fr.* to gaze

Myſelf, myſelve, myſelven. See Self

N.

Na, for no

N'adde, for ne hadde, had not

Naile, *s. Sax.* a nail; by nailes, by Goddes nailes, an oath

Nakere, *s.* a kind of brazen drum uſed in the cavalry. See *Du Cange* in *v. Nacara*

Nale, *s. Sax.* an alehouſe. But I am the leſs inclined to adopt Skinner's explanation of this word, becauſe I obſerve that ale alone is commonly put for an alehouſe, and I cannot find that nale is ever uſed, except where it follows the prepoſition atte. In the paſſage in *Pierce Plowgh.* 32, b. the *Cotton* mſ. *Veſp. B.* xvi. has at the ale; and ſo in *Pierce Plowgh.* 26, b. with idle tales at the ale.—Robert of Brunne's tranſlation of *Manuel des Pechées*, mſ. *Bodl.* 2313, fol. 1;

In gaymes, in feſtys, and at the ale.

fol. 38. Or yf thou leddeſt any man to the ale. I ſuſpect therefore that nale, in thoſe few paſſages in which it is found, ſhould be conſidered as merely a corruption which has ariſen from the miſpronunciation and conſequent miſwriting of atte nale for atten ale. A ſimilar corruption ſeems to have taken place in the name of that celebrated perſonage in our law Mr. John A-Noke, whoſe original appellation, I believe, was John Atten Oke, as that of his conſtant antagoniſt was John Atte Stile *ſim.* Atte Stile is a name in *Pierce Plowgh.* 23, b. and there are many others of the ſame form, as Atte-cliff, Atte-ley, Atte-well, Atte-wood, &c. That the letter *n* is apt to paſs from the end of one word to the beginning of another, we have an inſtance in newt, which has certainly been formed, by corruption, from an ewt or eft; and perhaps nedder, *n. Sax.* may have been formed in the ſame way from an adder: the word in the Teutonic is adder, as we write it now, without the initial *n*. The ſame corruptions have happened in other languages. See the notes of Signor Redi upon his *Bacco in Toſcana*, p. 133, 4, 5, 182, 3.

N'am, for ne am, am not

Name, *pa. t.* of nime, *v. Sax.* took

Nappe, *v. Sax.* to ſleep. See Knap

Narcotickes, *n. pl. Fr. Gr.* drugs cauſing ſleep

Narwe, *adj. Sax.* cloſe, narrow; whan they bem narwe aviſe, when they cloſely conſider their conduct

Nas, for ne was, was not

Naſo, *pr. n.* P. Ovidius Naſo. See Ovid

Nat, *adv. Sax.* not

Natal, *adj. Lat.* preſiding over nativity

Natheleſſe, natheles, *adv. Sax.* not the leſs, nevertheleſs

Nation, *n. Fr.* nation—family

Naught, nought, *n. Sax.* nothing

———, *adv.* not, not at all, it may more properly perhaps be conſidered as a noun uſed adverbially. See Nothing

Nay, *adj. Sax.* it ſeems to be uſed ſometimes as a noun; it is no nay, it cannot be denied

Nay, *v.* to deny

Ne, *adv. Sax.* not; ne had he ben holpen, had he not been helped

Ne, *conj. Sax.* nor

Nece, *n. Fr.* a niece—a couſin

Neceſſaire, *adj. Fr.* neceſſary

Nede, *n. Sax.* need, neceſſity

Nede, *v.* is generally uſed as an imperſonal; it nedeth thee nought teche; nedeth him no dwale; neded no more to hem to go ne rid

Nedeful, *adj.* diſtreſt, indigent

Nedely, *adv.* neceſſarily

Nedes, nede, *adv.* neceſſarily; it is uſually joined with muſt

Nedder, *n. Sax.* an adder; Neders, *pl.*

Neighe, *adj. Sax.* nigh

Neighe, *v.* to approach, to come near

Nekke, *n. Sax.* the neck; nekke-bone

Nempne, *v. Sax.* to name

Ner, *adv. Sax.* near

Nere, *comp. d.* nigher; never the nere, never the nigher; nere and nere, nigher and nigher; ferre ne nere, later nor earlier

N'ere, for ne were, were not; n'ere it, were it not; n'ere the friendſhip

Nerſe, *n. Fr.* nerve, ſinew

Neſhe, *adj. Sax.* ſoft, tender; Neſch and hard

Nete, *s. Sax.* neat cattle

Nether, *adj. comp. Sax.* lower

Nettle in dock out. See Raket

Neven, *v. Sax.* to name

Nevew, *n. Fr.* a nephew—a grandſon

Newe, *adj. Sax.* new, freſh

Newe, *adv.* newly; newe and newe, again and again; all newe; of newe, newly, lately; all new, anew, afreſh

Newe, *v.* to renew

Newed, *part. pa.* renewed

Newefangel, *adj.* deſirous of new things

Newefangelneſſe, *s.* inconſtancy

Nexte, *ſuperl. d.* nigheſt; it generally ſignifies the nigheſt, following, but ſometimes the nigheſt preceding

N'hath, for ne hath, hath not

Nice, *adj. Fr.* fooliſh

Nicetee, *n.* folly; do his nicetee; ſo the French uſe *faire folie*
Niſles, *n. pl.* trifles
Nigard, *n.* a ſtingy fellow
Nigardie, *n.* ſtingineſs
Nightertale, night-time
Night-ſpel, *n. Sax.* a night-charm
N'ill, for ne will, will not
N'is, for ne is, is not
N'iſte, for ne wiſte, knew not, *ſing.*; n'iſten, for ne wiſten, knew not, *pl.*
Nobledeſt, *pa. t. 2nd perſ. ſing.* of noble, *v. Fr.* ennobledeſt
Nobleſſe, *n. Fr.* dignity, ſplendour
Nobley, *n.* as nobleſſe
Nocked, *part. pa.* notched
Noie, *n. Fr.* hurt, trouble
Noie, *v.* to hurt, to trouble
Noiſe, *v. Fr.* to make a noiſe
N'olde, for ne wolde, would not
Nombre, *n. Fr.* number
Nomen, nome, *part. pa.* of nime, *v. Sax* taken
Nompere, *n.* an arbitrator. See the paſſage quoted above in *v.* Lovedaie. The ſenſe of this word is eſtabliſhed by the *Prompt. Parv.* nowmper or owmper, Arbiter, Sequeſter. If the etymology of it were as clear, we might be able to determine which of the two methods of writing it is the beſt; cuſtom has long declared for the latter. The modern word is umpire; and in *Pierce Plough*, 25, b. the edit. read—an umper, but the *Cotton* mſ. *Veſp. B.* xvi. has—a numper. I cannot find that any ſuch word is uſed, in the ſame ſenſe, in any other of the Gothic or romance languages: it has been ſuppoſed by ſome to be a corruption of *un pere*, *Fr.* which I can hardly believe; and perhaps the reader will be as backward to admit of a derivation of it from the *Fr. nonpai*, an odd or third perſon, which an arbitrator generally is. This however is the moſt probable etymology that has occurred to me, and I ſee that the compiler of the ſtatutes for the Univerſity of Oxford (whoever he was) had the ſame idea, for he expreſſes the word umpire in his Latin by impar, tit. xv. § 14. *Index, impar, aut arbitrator, in quâcunque cauſâ electus*
Non, *adj. Sax.* not one, none
Non, *adv. Fr.* not; abſent or non; whether ye wol or non
None, *n. Fr.* the ninth hour of the natural day, nine o'clock in the morning; the hour of dinner
Nones, for the nones
Nonne, *n. Fr.* a nun
Norice, *n. Fr.* a nurſe; in other paſſages, it is printed by miſtake for norie, *n.* a foſter-child, *alumnus*
Nortelfte, *n.* nurture, education
Noſethirles, *n. pl. Sax.* noſtrils
N'ot, for ne wot, know not
Notabilitee, *n. Fr.* a thing worthy of obſervation
Note, *n. Sax.* need, buſineſs
Note, *n. Fr.* a muſical note; to cry by note, to cry aloud, in a high tone
Notemuge, *n.* nutmeg
Notes, *n. pl. Sax.* nuts
Not-hed, a head like a nut
Nother, *conj. Sax.* nor, neither
N'other, *adj. Sax.* for ne other; neither n'other, nor one nor other; he n'is in neither n'other habite; *neutro eſt habitu*, orig.
Nothing, *adv. Sax.* not, not at all
Nouches, *n. pl.* It is probable, I think, that *nouche* is the true word, and that *ouche* has been introduced by a corruption the reverſe of that which has been taken notice of in *Nale*. See *Du Cange* in *v. Nochia* and *Nuſca*, and *Schilter*, Gloſſ. *Teut.* in *v. Nuſci*, from whence it appears that *nuſchin*, *Teut.* ſignifies *fibula*, a claſp or buckle. As theſe were ſome of the moſt uſeful inſtruments of dreſs they were probably ſome of the firſt that were ornamented with jewels, by which means the name by degrees may have been extended ſo as to include ſeveral other ſorts of jewels; the ſame thing may have happened in the caſe of the word broche, [ſee above] which indeed ſeems originally to have been a French expreſſion for *nouche*
Nought, *n.* & *adv. Sax.* See Naught
Nouthe, *adv. Sax.* now
Novelries, *n. pl. Fr.* novelties
Now, *adv. Sax.* now and now, once and again; now adayes, in theſe days
Nowel, *n. Fr.* Chriſtmas
Noyſaunce, *n. Fr.* offence, treſpaſs

O

O, for ho. See Ho
O, *adj.* for on, one; in the curious old ballad on the battle of Lewes, [*Anc. Poet.* v. ii. p. 4. l. 20.] oferling ſhould be written, I believe, o ferling, *i. e.* one farthing
Obeyſance, *n. Fr.* obedience; obeyſing
Obeyſant, *part. pr. Fr.* obedient; obeyſing
Obſequies, *n. pl. Fr.* funeral rites
Obſervance, *n. Fr.* reſpect
Obſerve, *v. Fr.* to reſpect, to pay regard to
Occident, *n. Fr.* the weſt
Octavien, *pr. n.* I do not ſuppoſe that Auguſtus is meant, but rather the fabulous emperour who is the ſubject of a romance entitled *Octavian Imperator*, mſ. *Cotton, Calig.* ii. See *Percy's Catalogue*, n. 18. The ſame Octavian, I apprehend, was celebrated in a piece of Arras hangings which made part of the furniture of Henry V. and is thus deſcribed in the inventory, *Rot. Parl.* 2. Hen. VI. Item 1 *autre piece d'arras D or q comence en l'eſtorie*, Le Octavion Roy de Rome
Ocy, ocy, the nightingale's note
Oerthrow, for overthrow, *part. pa. Sax.* overthrown
Oetus, *pr. n.* Æetes
Of, *adv. Sax.* off
Offended, *part. pa Fr.* hurt
Offenſioun, *n.* offence, damage
Offertorie, *n. Fr.* a part of the maſs
Offring, *n. Fr.* offering at maſs
Oft, ofte, *adv. Sax.* often: often-ſith, oftentimes
Oinement, *n. Fr.* ointment
Oliſaunt, *n. Fr.* elephant

Oliveres, *n. pl. Fr.* olive-trees
Omer, *pr. n.* Homer
On, *prep. Sax.* in; on live, in life, alive; on twelve, in twelve; on hunting; on hawking. See A, *prep.*—upon; on to ſee, to look upon. Licurgus daughter, fairer on to ſene—ſo this line is written in mſ. *Bodl.*
On, *adj. Sax.* one; after on, alike; they were at on, they were agreed; ever in on, continually; I mine on, I ſingle, I by myſelf; and thus I went widewher walking mine one; non ſaw but he one; all him one
Onde, *n. Sax.* zeal, malice; ny the and onde
Oned, *part. pa. Sax.* made one, united
Ones, *pl.* of on; we three ben alie ones, we three are all one
Ones, *adv. Sax.* once; at ones, at once, at the ſame time
Onhed, *n. Sax.* unity
Only, *adv. Sax.* al only, ſolely
Ony, *adj. Sax.* any
Open-ers, *n. Sax.* the fruit of the medlar tree
Open-heded, *adj.* bareheaded
Opie, *n. Fr.* opium
Oppreſſe, *v. Fr.* to raviſh
Oppreſſed, *part. pa.*
Oppreſſion, *n.* rape
Or, *adv. Sax.* er, before
Oratorie, *n. Fr.* a chapel, a cloſet
Ordal, *n. Sax.* judicial trial. See *Kilian* in *v. Oordeel*, and Hickes *Diſſert. Epiſt.* p. 149. It is poſſible however that Chaucer may have uſed this word in its more confined ſenſe, for a trial by fire or water, without conſidering whether ſuch trials were practiſed at Troy.
Orde, *n. Sax.* a point
Ordered, *part. pa.* ordained in holy orders
Orders four, the four orders of mendicant friars
Ordinance, *n. Fr.* orderly, diſpoſition
Ordinat, *part. pa.* orderly, regular
Ore, *n. Sax.* grace, favour
Orrwell, *pr. n.* a ſeaport in Eſſex
Orfrays, *n. Fr.* gold embroidery. See *Du Cange* in *v. Aurifrigia*
Orient, *n. Fr.* the eaſt
Origenes, *pr. n.* In the liſt of Chaucer's Works he ſays of himſelf, that

> He made alſo, gon is a grete while,
> Origenes upon the Maudelaine——

meaning, I ſuppoſe, a tranſlation into proſe or verſe of the homily *de Mariâ Magdalenâ*, which has been commonly, though falſely, attributed to Origen. V. *Opp. Origenis*, t. ii. p. 291, ed. Paris, 1604. I cannot believe that the poem entitled The Lamentation of Marie Magdalcine, which is in all the editions of Chaucer, is really that work of his; it can hardly be conſidered as a tranſlation or even imitation of the homily, and the compoſition, in every reſpect, is infinitely meaner than the worſt of his genuine pieces
Oriſont, *n. Fr.* the horizon
Orloge, *n. Fr.* a clock or dial
Orpiment, *pr. n.* a mineral ſo called
Other, *adj. Sax. alter, Lat.* the other of two; others, *gen. ca.*
Other, *adj. Sax. alius, Lat.*
Other, *conj. Sax* or either
Ouche. See Nouche
Over, *prep. Sax.* above; over all, in every caſe, on every ſide
Over, *adj. Sax.* upper
Overeſt, *ſuperl. d.* uppermoſt
Over-gret, *adj. Sax.* too great
Over-ladde, *part. pa.* overborn; do not the people oppreſſe nor overlede, *Lydg. Tra.*
Over-live, *v. Sax.* to outlive
Over-merily, *adv. Sax.* too merrily
Over-moche, *adj. Sax.* too great
Over-nome, *part. pa.* of over-time, *v. Sax.* overtaken
Over-ſpradde, *pa. t. Sax.* overſpread
Overte, *adj. Fr.* open
Overthrew, *pa. t.* of overthrow, *v. neut. Sax.* fell down
Overthrowing, *part. pr. Sax.* falling headlong; by overthrowing way, *præcipiti viâ*, orig.; and therfore clepeth Caſſiodore poverte the moder of ruine, that is to ſay, the moder of overthrowing or falling doun
Over-thwart, *adv. Sax.* acroſs, over againſt
Over-timeliche, *adv. Sax.* too early
Ovide, *pr. n.* Our Author ſeems to have been well acquainted with the beſt part of Ovid's works; moſt of the hiſtories in his Legende of Good Women are taken from the Epiſtolæ Heroidum or the Metamorphoſes; that of Lucrece ſhews that he had read the Faſti
Ought, *n. Sax.* any thing, *adv.* See Aught. The difference has ariſen merely from the different uſages of writing *a* or *o* for one
Ought, *pa. t.* of owe
Oughten, oughte. From hence, as it ſeems, has been formed a new verb ought, which is very commonly uſed in the preſent tenſe for owe in both numbers. Ought is alſo uſed as an *imperf.* in the *pr.* and *pa. t.*; wel ought us werke, well behoveth it us to work; hem oughte have gret repentance, it behoved them to have great repentance
Ounding, *n. Fr.* waving, imitating waves
Oures, *pr. poſſ. Sax.* ours
Out, *interj. Sax.* away
Out, *adv. Sax.* out and out, throughout
Outhees, *n. Lat. barb.* outcry; and born to London brigge full hie with outheys
Outrage, *n. Fr.* violence
Outraie, *v. Fr.* to fly out, to be outrageous
Out-rede, *v. Sax.* to ſurpaſs in counſel
Outrely, *adv. Fr.* utterly
Out-renne, *v. Sax.* to outrun
Outſtraught, *pa. t.* of outſtretch, *v. Sax.* ſtretched out
Out-taken, *part. pa.* taken out, excepted; out-taken Criſt on loft, Chriſt in heaven being excepted; out-take Carleon that was in Arthure tyme
Owe, *v. Sax. debeo*; owen, *pl.*
Owen, owne, *part. pa.*
Owhere, *adv. Sax.* any where
Owndie, *adj. Fr.* waving
Oxenforde, *pr. n.* Oxford
Oyſe, *pr. n.* a river in Picardy

P.

Pace, *v. Fr.* to paſs away, to ſurpaſs
Page, *n. Fr.* a boy-child, a boy ſervant
Paie, *n. Fr.* liking, ſatisfaction
Paie, *v. Fr.* to pleaſe, to ſatisfy, to pay; paide, *part. pa.* pleaſed, payed
Paillet, *n. Fr.* a couch, (properly of ſtraw)
Paindemaine, *n. Fr.* a ſort of bread
Paire, *v. Fr.* to impair; if I ſpeke ought to paire her loos, *i. e.* to impair their credit or reputation; ſo this line is written in edit. 1542, and mſ. *Hunter*
Palamedes, *pr. n.* not the ſon of Nauplius, one of the Grecian commanders at the war of Troy, but a knight of the Round Table, called Palomides in *Mort d' Arthur*, the unſucceſsful rival of Triſtan, for the love of *la Belle Iſoude*. See *Mort d' Arthur*, b. ii. which ſeems to be compiled chiefly from the *Roman de Triſtan*
Palaſins, *n. pl. Fr.* ladies palaſins, ladies of the court; in the orig. *palatines*. See *Du Cange* in v. *Palatini*
Palatie, *pr. n. Palathia* in *Anatolia*. *Sp.*
Pale, *n.* a perpendicular ſtripe in heraldry
Pale, *v. Fr.* to make pale
Paleis, *n. Fr.* a palace
Pulfreis, *n. pl. Fr.* horſes for the road, where ſtedes are horſes for battle; ne large palfrey eſy for the nones
Paling, *n. Fr.* imitating pales
Palladion, *n. Gr.* the image of Pallas at Troy
Palled, *part. pa. Fr.* made pale
Palmeres, *n. pl.* pilgrims to foreign parts
Palmerie, *pr. n.* Palmyra in Syria
Pamphilus, *pr. n.*
Pampred, *part. pa.* pampered, made plump. See *Jun. Etymol.* who derives it from the *Fr. pampre*, a vine branch full of leaves
Pan, *pr. n.* the Heathen deity
Pan, *n. Sax.* the ſkull, the head
Panter, *n. Fr.* a net
Papelard, *n. Fr.* a hypocrite
Papelardie, *n. Fr.* hypocriſy
Paper-white, *adj.* white as paper
Par, *prep. Fr.* par amour, with love; par compagne, for company; par chance, by chance; par cuere, by heart, *memoriter*
Paraboles, *n. pl. Fr.* parables, the Proverbs of Solomon
Parage, *n. Fr.* kindred
Paraille, *n. Fr.* apparel
Paramour, paramours, *n. Fr.* love, gallantry, a lover of either ſex
Paraventure, *adv. Fr.* haply, by chance
Paraunter, corruption of paraventure
Parcæ, *n. pl. Lat.* the Fates
Parcel-mele, *adv.* by parcels or parts
Parde, pardiaux, a common French oath, which moſt of the perſonages in Chaucer expreſs very frequently in Engliſh, with as little ceremony as the Greeks uſed their μὰ Δία, and with as little meaning too [cies
Pardoner, *n. Fr.* a ſeller of pardons or indulgen-
Parements, *n. pl. Fr.* ornamental furniture of clothes
Parentele, *n. Fr.* kindred
Parfay, *Fr. par foy*, by my faith
Parſei, as parfay
Parfit, *adj. Fr.* perfect
Parfitly, *adv.* perfectly
Parfourme, *v. Fr.* to perform
Pariſhens, *n. pl. Fr.* pariſhioners
Paritorie, *n. Fr. Lat.* the herb paries taria, or pellitory of the wall
Parlement, *n. Fr.* an aſſembly for conſultation, a conſultation
Parten, *inf. m. Fr.* to take part
Partie, *n. Fr.* a part, a party in a diſpute
Parvis, *n. Fr.* a portico before a church, *Du Cange* in v. *Paradiſus* I. It appears that books were commonly ſold *au Parvis devant Notre Dame* at Paris. At London the *Parvis* was frequented by Serjeants at Law. See *Forteſcue de Laud. leg. Ang.* c. li. "Poſt meridiem curiæ non tenentur; ſed "placitantes tunc ſe divertunt ad Pervi- "ſum et alibi, conſulentes cum Servientibus "ad Legem et aliis conſiliariis ſuis." There is a difference of opinion where the parvis at London, to which the lawyers reſorted, was ſituated; Somner ſuppoſes it to have been in Old-Palace-yard, before Weſtminſter-hall, Gloſſ. in X. *Script.* v. *Triforium*; but others, with more probability, think it was what Dugdale calls The Pervyſe of Pawles. When the Serjeants had dined in any of the inns of court, St. Paul's lay much more conveniently for an afternoon conſultation than Weſtminſter-hall
Pas, *n. Fr.* a footpace; his horſe—on which he rode a pas ful ſoftely [ſentence
Paſs, *v. Fr.* to ſurpaſs, to excel, to judge, to paſs
Paſſant, paſſing, *part. pr.* excelling [*ter noſter*
Patren, *inf. m.* to pray, properly to repeat the *Pa-*
Pavade, *n.* a weapon of offence
Paumes, *n. pl. Fr.* the palms of the hands
Pax, to kiſſe the pax: for an account of this ceremony, ſee *Du Cange* in v.
Payen, *adj. Fr.* Pagan
Paynes, *n pl.* Heathens
Payſaunce, *n.* pauſing or ſtopping, Gloſſ. *Ur.* q. ?
Pecunial, *adj* pecuniary, paid in money
Pees, *n. Fr.* peace; when uſed as an interjection, it ſignifies the ſame as hold thy pees, be ſilent
Peine, *n. Fr.* penalty; up peine of deth. See Up.—Grief, torment, labour
Peine, *v. Fr.* to torture, to put to pain; ſhe peined hire, ſhe took great pains
Peiſe, *v. Fr.* to poiſe, to weigh
Pell, *n.* a houſe, a cell, *Sp.* and *Sk.* f. a palace, Gloſſ. *Ur.* q. ?
Pellet, *n. Fr.* pelotte, a ball
Penance, *n. Fr.* repentance, pains to be undergone by way of ſatisfaction for ſin, pain, ſorrow
Penant, *n. Fr.* a perſon doing penance
Pencell, *n. Fr.* pennoncel, a ſmall ſtreamer
Penible, *adj.* induſtrious, pains-taking
Penitencer, *n. Fr.* a prieſt who enjoins penance in extraordinary caſes
Penmark, *pr. n.* a place in Bretagne

Penner, *n.* a pencaſe. In the inventory of the goods of Henry V. *Rot. Parl.* 2 H. VI. n. 15, m. 13, is the following article, *Un penner' et 1 yakborn d' arg.' dorrez*; and again, m. 20, 1 *penacre et* 1 *corne covert du velvet bloy*

Penon, *n. Fr.* a ſtreamer or enſign

Pens, *n. pl. Sax.* pennies

Penſell, *n.* as pencell

Penſifeſhed, *n.* penſiveneſs

Peper, *n. Lat.* pepper; to brewe peper, ſeems to be an expreſſion for the preparation of a hot pungent liquor which ſhould burn the throats of the drinkers; in the orig. it is—*dames le braſſeront tel poivre*

Peple, *n. Fr.* people

Pepliſh, *adj.* vulgar

Perche, *n. Fr.* a pearch for birds

Percel, *adv.* parcel

Perda, as *pardé*

Pere, *v.* to appear

Pere, *n. Fr.* a peer, an equal

Peregal, *adj.* equal

Peregrine, *adj. Fr.* wandering

Pereles, *adj.* without an equal

Perjenete, *n.* a young pear

Pernaſa, *pr. n.* Mount Parnaſſus

Perrie, *n. Fr.* jewels, precious ſtones

Perſaunt, *part. pa. Fr.* piercing

Perſe, *pr. n.* Perſia

Perſe, *adj. Fr.* ſky coloured, of a blewiſh gray

Perſelee, *n. Sax. Lat.* parſley

Perſone, *n. barb. Lat.* a man, generally a man of dignity, a parſon or rector of a church

Pertelote, *pr. n.* of a hen

Perturbe, *v. Fr.* to trouble

Perturbing, *n.* diſturbance

Pervinke, *n. Sax. Lat.* the herb periwinkle

Pery, *n. Fr.* a pear tree

Peſe, *n. Fr.* as pees

Peſon, *n. pl. Sax.* peas

Peſible, *adj.* peaceable

Peter Alfonſe, Piers Alfonſe

Petrark, *pr. n.* Our author has inſerted a tranſlation of the 102d ſonnet of Petrarch into his Troilus and Creſeide; it is not in the Filoſtrato: there ſeems to be no ſufficient reaſon for believing that Chaucer had ever ſeen Petrarch.

Peytrel, *n. Fr.* the breaſtplate of a horſe

Phiſike, *n. Fr.* medicine

Phiſiologus, *pr. n.* There was a larger work with the ſame title in proſe, which is frequently quoted by Vincent of Beauvais

Phiton, *pr. n.* the ſerpent Python

Phitoneſſe, *n. barb. Lat.* a witch

Pie, *n. Fr.* a magpie, a pratting goſſip or tell-tale

Pierrie, *n. Fr.* jewels, precious ſtones

Piggeſnie. The Romans uſed *oculus* as a term of endearment; and perhaps Piggeſnie, in vulgar language, only means *oculus*, the eyes of that animal being remarkably ſmall

Pight, *pa. t.* of pike, *v. Sax.* pitched

Pike, *v. Sax.* to pitch, to pick, as a hawk does his feathers, to ſteal, to peep

Pike, *n. Sax.* a fiſh ſo called

Pikerel, *n. Sax.* a young pike

Pilche, *n. Sax.* a coat or cloak of ſkins, *Prov.* 4; *toga pellicea*, *Junius* in v.

Piler, *n. Fr.* a pillar

Pille, *v. Fr.* piller, to rob, to plunder

Pilled, rather pled, *part. pa. Fr. pelé*, bald

Pillours, *n. pl. Fr.* plunderers

Pilwe, *n. Sax.* a pillow

Pilwe-bere, *n. Sax.* the covering of a pillow

Piment, *n. barb. Lat.* ſpiced wine, wine mixed with honey

Pinche, *v. Fr.* to ſqueeze; ther coude no wight pinche at his writing, no one could lay hold of any flaw in his writings

Pine, *n. Sax.* pain, grief

Pine, *v. Sax.* to torment

Pined, *part pa.* tortured

Pipe, *v. Sax.* to play on a pipe; to pipe in an ivy leſe, is put for any uſeleſs employment, as is now ſaid of a diſappointed man, He may go whiſtle. See Buckes horn

Piſtell, *n. Sax. Lat.* an epiſtle, a ſhort leſſon

Pitance, *n. Fr.* a meſs of victuals; it properly means an extraordinary allowance of victuals given to monaſticks, in addition to their uſual commons. See *Du Cange* in v. *Pictantia*

Pith, *n. Sax.* marrow, ſtrength

Pitous, *adj. Fr.* merciful, compaſſionate, exciting compaſſion

Pitouſly, *adv.* pitifully

Plage, *n. Lat.* the plague

Plages, *n. pl. Lat.* the diviſions of the globe; the plages of the north, the northern regions

Plain, *n. Fr.* a plain

Plain, *adj.* ſimple, clear; it is often uſed as an adverb

Plain, *v.* to make plain

Plaine, *v. Fr.* to complain

Plainliche, *adv.* plainly

Plat, platte, *adj. Fr.* flat, plain, the flat of a ſword; it is often uſed as an adverb; all plat, *i. e.* flatly; full plat and eke ful plain

Plate, *n.* a flat piece of metal; a breſt-plate, armour for the breaſt; a pair of plates, armour for the breaſt and back

Play, *n. Sax.* ſport, pleaſure

Play, *v.* to ſport, to take pleaſure, to act upon a ſtage, to play upon muſical inſtruments, to lead a pilgrimage, to withdraw upon pretence of going on a pilgrimage

Ple, *n. Fr.* an argument or pleading

Plein, *adj. Fr.* full, perfect

Plenere, *adj. Fr.* complete

Pleſance, *n. Fr.* pleaſure

Pleſinges, *n. pl.* pleaſures

Plete, *v. Fr.* to plead

Pleting, *n.* pleading

Plie, *v. Fr.* to bend or mold

Plight, *n.* condition

Plight, *pa. t.* & *part.* of pluck, *v. Sax.* pulled, plucked

Plighte, *v. Sax.* to engage, to promiſe

Plighte, *pa. t.* plighten, *pl.*

Plite, *v.* to plait or fold. See Plie

Plite, *n.* condition, form. See plight

Plungy, *adj. Fr.* wet, rainy

Pulcis, *adj. Fr.* of Apulia, anciently called Poile. *Willemme's dogter Converſant in Poyle to wayve be wone*

Point, *n. Fr.* the principal buſineſs, a ſtop or full point; in good point, in good caſe or condition; at point deviſe, with the greateſt exactneſs; at point to breſt, in point for to braſt, ready to burſt

Pointel, *n. Fr.* a ſtyle or pencil for writing

Pointen, *inf. m. v. Fr.* to prick with any thing pointed

Poke, *n. Fr.* a pocket, a bag. See Pouche

Poke, *v. Fr.* to thruſt

Polive, *n.* a pulley

Pollax, *n. Sax.* a halberd, *bipennis. Prompt. Parv.*

Pomel, *n. Fr.* any ball or round thing, the top of the head

Pomelee, *adj. Fr.* ſpotted with round ſpots like apples, dappled; pomelee gris, of a dapple-gray colour

Popelot, *n.* This word may either be conſidered as a diminutive from pouplé, a puppet, or as a corruption of papellot, a butterfly

Popet, *n Fr.* a puppet

Popingay, *n.* a parrot; *papegaut*, Fr. *papegacy*, Belg. *papagallo*, Ital.

Popped, *adj. Fr.* nicely dreſſed

Popper, *n.* joly popper, a bodkin, according to *Sp.* and *Sk.* who however produce no authority for ſuch interpretation. The name ſeems to be fitter for a piſtol

Pore, *v.* to look earneſtly, poren, *pr. t. pl.*

Pore, *adj.* for poure

Poriſme, *n. Gr.* is uſed in the ſenſe of—a coronary, a theorem deduced from another

Porphurie, *pr. n.* of a ſpecies of marble, porphyry

Port, *n. Fr.* carriage, behaviour

Portecoliſe, *n. Fr.* a falling gate, a portcullis

Portor, *n.* a breviary, *Du Cange* in v. *Portiforium*

Poſe, *n.* a rheum or defluction obſtructing the voice, *catarris, coriſa, Promp. Parv.*

Poſe, *v. Fr.* to ſuppoſe; I poſe I had ſinned ſo

Poſſe, *v. Fr.* to puſh

Poſſed, *part. pa.*

Poſſeſſioners, *n pl. Lat.* an invidious name for ſuch religious communities as were endowed with lands, &c. the mendicant orders profeſſed to live entirely upon alms

Poſt, *n. Sax.* a prop or ſupport

Poſté, *n. Fr.* power

Potecary, *n. Fr.* an apothecary

Potent, *n. Fr.* a crutch, a walking-ſtick

Potential, *adj Fr.* ſtrong, powerful

Poteſtat, *n. Fr.* a prineipal magiſtrate

Pouche, *n. Fr.* pocket, pouch

Poudre, *n. Fr.* powder, poudres, *pl.*

Poverte, *n. Fr.* poverty; it is to be pronounced poverte, the final *e* being conſidered as an *e* feminine

Poulce, *n. Fr.* the pouliſe

Poule, *pr. n.* St. Paul

Pounſoned, *part. pa.* punched with a bodkin

Poupe, *v.* to make a noiſe with a horn

Pourchace, *n. Fr.* to buy, to provide

Pourchas, *n. Fr.* acquiſition, purſhaſe

Poure, *v.* as pore

Poure, *adj. Fr.* poor

Pourtraie, *v. Fr.* to draw a picture

Pourtraiour, *n.* a drawer of pictures

Pourtaiture, a picture or drawing

Practike, *n. Fr.* practice

Preamble, *n. Fr.* preface

Preambulatioun, *n.* preamble

Precious, *adj. Fr.* over nice

Predeſtiné, *n. Fr.* predeſtination

Predication, *n. Fr.* preaching, a ſermon

Prees, *n. Fr.* a preſs or crowd

Preſe, preve, *n. Fr.* proof, trial; at preve, on trial; with evil preſe, evil may it prove. See With [trate

Preſect, *n. Fr. Lat.* a governor or principal magiſ-

Preiſe, *n. Fr.* commendatiön

Preiſe, *v. Fr.* to commend, to value

Prentis, *n. Fr.* an apprentice

Prentiſhode, *n.* apprenticeſhip

Preparat, *part. pa. Lat.* prepared

Prés, *adv. Fr.* near, ſo I ſuſpect this word is to be underſtood; of prés, *i. e.* at hand, cloſe; *de prés*, Fr. or perhaps of prés may be put for in a prees. See Prees

Preſe, *v. Fr.* to preſs or crowd

Preſent, *v. Fr.* to offer, to make a preſent of; and with the wine ſhe gan hem to preſent; and ſmote his head of, his fader to preſent

Preſentarie, *adj. Lat.* preſent

Preſt, *adj. Fr.* ready

Pretend, *v. Fr.* to lay claim to

Preterit, *adj. Fr.* paſſed

Preve, *v. Fr.* to try, to demonſtrate by trial

Preve, *v. neut.* to turn out upon trial

Prick, *n. Sax.* a point, a pointed weapon

Prick, prike, *v. Sax.* to wound, to ſpur a horſe, to ride hard

Prickaſour, *n.* a hard rider

Pricking, *n.* hard riding

Pridelee, *adj. Sax.* without pride

Prie, *v.* to look curiouſly

Prikke, *n.* See Prick

Prime, *adj. Fr. Lat.* firſt; at prime tempa, at the firſt time; at prime face, at firſt appearance

Prime, *n.* the firſt quarter of the artificial day; half way prime, prime half ſpent; prime large, prime far advanced

Primerole, *n. Fr.* a primroſe, *Conf. Am.* 148. b.

Primetemps, *n. Fr.* ſpring

Pris, *n. Fr.* price, praiſe; it be prys, or it be blame, *Conf. Am.* 165

Privé, *adj. Fr.* private; privé and apert, private and public; privé man, a man entruſted with private buſineſs

Prively, *adv.* privately

Privetee, *n.* private buſineſs

Proceſſe, *n. Lat.* progreſs

Proceſſioun, *n. Fr.* the monaſtic proceſſion

Proheme, *n. Fr. Gr.* a preface

Proine, *v. Fr.* provigner; it ſeems to have ſignified originally to take cuttings from vines, in order to plant them out; from hence it has been uſed for the cutting away of the ſuperfluous ſhoots of all trees, which we now call pruning,

and for that operation which birds, and particularly hawks, perform upon themſelves, of picking out their ſuperfluous or damaged feathers. In alluſion to this laſt ſenſe, Damian is ſaid to proine and pike himſelf. Gower, ſpeaking of an eagle, ſays,

> For there he pruneth him and piketh,
> As doth an hauke, when him wel liketh.
> *Conf. Am.* 139.

Prolle, *v.* to go about in ſearch of a thing
Provable, *adj. Fr.* capable of being demonſtrated
Provende, *n. Fr. prebenda, Lat.* a prebend, a daily or annual allowance or ſtipend. See *Du Cange* in *v. Prebenda*
Provendre, *n.* a prebendary
Proverbe, *n. Fr. Lat.* a prudential maxim
Proverbe, *v.* to ſpeak proverbially
Provoſtry, *n. Fr.* the office of provoſt or preſect; *præfectura*
Prow, *n. Fr.* profit, advantage
Prowesſe, *n. Fr.* integrity
Pruce, *pr. n.* Pruſſia
Pruce, *adj.* Pruſſian
Pruned, *pa. t.* as proined
Ptholomee, *pr. n.*
Puella and Rubeus, the names of two figures in geomancy, repreſenting two conſtellations in heaven: Puella ſignifieth Mars retrograde, and Rubeus Mars direct, *Sp.*
Pulchritude, *n. Lat.* beauty
Pullaile, *n. Fr.* poultry
Pulled hen, I have been told ſince that a hen, whoſe feathers are pulled or plucked off, will not lay any eggs; if that be true, there is more force in the epithet than I apprehended
Punice, *v. Fr.* to puniſh
Pure, *adj. Fr.* mere, very
Pured, *part. pa.* purified
Purfiled, *part. pa. Fr.* worked upon the edge
Purpos, *n. Fr.* purpoſe, deſign, propoſition in diſcourſe
Purptiſe, *n. Fr.* an encloſure
Purveyance, *n. Fr.* foreſight, providence, proviſion
Purveye, *v.* to foreſee, to provide
Puterie, *n. Fr.* whoredom
Putours, *n. pl.* whoremongers
Pythagoras, *pr. n.*

Q.

Quad, quade, *adj. Teut.* bad; none quad, nothing evil
Quaile-pipe, *n.* a pipe uſed to call quails
Quaire, *n. Fr.* a quire of paper, a book
Quakke, *n.* ſeems to be put for an inarticulate noiſe occaſioned by any obſtruction in the throat
Qualme, *n. Sax.* ſickneſs, the noiſe made by a raven
Quappe, *v.* to tremble, to quake
Quarels, *n. pl. Fr.* ſquare arrows
Queint, *n.* See *Junii Etymolog.* in *v.*
Queinte, *adj. Fr.* ſtrange; I made of that leſs full queint, he made it ſtrange, cunning, artful, trim, neat
Queinte, *pa. t.* and *part.* of quench, *v. Sax.* quenched
Queintiſe, *n.* trimneſs, neatneſs, exceſſive trimneſs, cunning
Quelle, *v. Sax.* to kill, to deſtroy
Queme, *v. Sax.* to pleaſe; wel me quemeth, *Conf. Am.* 68
Quene, *n. Sax.* a queen, a harlot
Querne, *n. Sax.* a handmill
Querrour, *n. Fr.* one that works in a ſtone quarry
Queſte, *n. Fr.* a prayer or demand
Queſt-mongers, *n. pl.* packers of inqueſts or juries
Quethe, *v. Sax.* to ſay, to declare; I quethe him quite, is a tranſlation of an old technical term in the law *Glomo illi quietum*; the original *Fr.* has only *Je quitte*
Quik, *adj. Sax.* alive
Quikkeſt, *ſuperl. d.* ſpeedieſt; the quikkeſt ſtrete, the moſt expeditious way
Quiken, *v. Sax.* to make alive
Quiked, *part. pa.* made alive
Quiked, *pa. t.* of the ſame *v.* uſed in a neutral ſenſe, became alive
Quinible, *n.* is the inſtrument, I ſuppoſe, which is called in barb. Lat. *quinterna* and *quinteria*. See *Du Cange* and *Carpentier* in *v. Quinternizare*, and *Mibus, Vita d' Ambr. Camald. lyrâ, limbatâ, quinteriâ, ribebâ, avenâ, tibiiſque*
Quiſhin, *n. Fr.* a cuſhion
Quiſtron, *n.* a beggar, Gloſſ. *Ur.* I rather believe it ſignifies a ſcullion, *un garçon de cuiſine*
Quite, *adj. Fr.* free, quiet
Quite, *v. Fr.* to requite, to pay for, to acquit
Quitte; *part. pa.* requitted
Quitely, *adv.* freely, at liberty
Quod, *pa. t.* of quethe, ſaid
Quoke, *pa. t.* of quake, *v. Sax.* trembled, ſhook

R.

Ra. *n. Sax.* a roe deer
Racine, *n. Fr.* a root
Rad, radde, *pa. t.* of rede, *v. Sax.* adviſed, explained, *Du.* 281
Radevore, tapeſtry; *ras*, in *Fr.* ſignifies any ſtuff, as *ras de Chalons, ras de Gennes, ras de Vere* or *Veur*; may be a ſtuff made at ſuch a place, Gloſſ. *Ur.* There is a town in Languedoc called *La Veur*, but I know not that it was ever famous for tapeſtry
Raſles, *n. pl. Fr.* plays with dice
Raſte, *pa. t.* of reve, *v. Sax.* took away
Rage, *v. Fr.* to toy wantonly
Ragerie, *n.* wantonneſs
Ragounces, ſhould probably be jagonces, as in the orig. *Fr.* the precious ſtones called jacinths or hyacinths
Raines, *pr. n.* the city of Rennes in Bretagne
Rake-ſtele, *n. Sax.* the handle of a rake
Rakel, *adj.* haſty, raſh
Rakelneſſe, *n.* raſhneſs
Raket, to play racket, nettle in dock out, ſeems to be uſed as a proverbial expreſſion, ſignifying to

be inconſtant; what the original of the phraſe may have been, is not ſo clear

Ramage, *adj. Fr.* wild

Rammiſh, *adj. Sax.* rank like a ram

Rampe, *v. Fr.* to climb; ſhe rampeth in my face, ſhe riſes againſt me, flies in my face

Ran, *pa. t.* of renne, rannen, *pl.*

Rape, *adv.* quickly, ſpeedily

Rape, *n.* haſte

Rape, *v. Sax.* to take captive; to rape and renne, to ſeize and plunder. See Renne

Raſis, *pr. n.* an Arabian phyſician of the 10th century. See *Fabric. Bibl. Gr.* t. xiii. p. 46, in v. *Albubecar*

Raſkaile, *n.* a pack of raſcals

Rated, *part. pa.* chidden

Rathe, *adv. Sax* ſoon, early, ſpeedily

Rather, *comp. d.* ſooner

Ratheſt, *ſuperl. d.* ſooneſt

Rather, *adj. Sax. comp. d.* former

Ratouns, *n. pl. Fr.* rats

Raught, *pa. t.* of ræcan, *v. Sax.* reached; oft his way he raught, he ſprang forth on his way.

Raught, *pa. t.* of reccan, *v. Sax.* cared, recked

Raveners, (ravinours) *n. pl* plunderers

Ravine, *n. Fr.* rapine; ſoules of raven, birds of prey

Raviſable, *adj. Fr.* ravenous

Raviſhing, *part. pr. Fr.* rapid; with a raviſhing ſweigh; *rapido turbine*, orig. See Swegh

Raunſon, *n. Fr.* ranſom

Rayed, *part. pa.* ſtreaked or ſtriped, *Du.* 253

Real, *adj. Fr.* royal

Reller, *comp. d.* more royal

Reallich, *adv.* royally

Realtee, *n.* royalty

Rebekke, *pr. n.* Rebecca

Rebekke, *n. Fr.* a muſical inſtrument

Rechaſed, *pa. t. Fr.* a term in hunting, *Du.* 579

Recche, rekke, *v. Sax.* to care

Reccheles, *adj.* careleſs

Recchelesneſſe, *n.* careleſneſs

Reclaime, *v. Fr.* a term in falconry for bringing the hawk to the fiſt by a certain call

Reclaiming, *n.* calling, in the ſenſe of reclaime

Recomfort, *v. Fr.* to comfort

Record, *n. Fr.* witneſs, teſtimony

Recorde, *v. Fr.* to remember; it ſometimes ſeems to be uſed in a technical legal ſenſe, for what is called to enter upon record in judicial proceedings

Recreandiſe, *n. Fr.* ſignifies fear, cowardice, deſertion of principle

Recreant, *adj.* one who yields himſelf to his adverſary in ſingle combat; for the full import of theſe two words, ſee *Du Cange* in v. *Recredentia*

Recure, *n. Fr.* recovery

Recured, *part. pa. Fr.* recovered

Redde, red, *pa. t.* of rede, *v. Sax.*

Reddour, *n. Fr.* ſtrength, violence

Rede, *n. Sax.* advice, counſel, a reed

Rede, *v. Sax.* to adviſe, to read, to explain, *Du.* 279

Rede, *adj. Sax.* red

Redoute, *v. Fr.* to fear

Redouting, *n.* reverence

Redreſſe, *v. Fr.* to recover, to make amends for

Refect, *part. pa. Lat.* recovered

Refiguring, *part. pa. Fr.* figuring again

Refrain, *n Fr.* the burden of a ſong

Refraining, *n.* the ſinging of the burden of a ſong

Refreide, *v. Fr.* to cool

Refrete, *n.* the ſame as refrain, in *Ber.* it is printed corruptly frefreit

Refte, riſte, *n. Sax.* a chink or crevice

Refute, *n. Fr.* refuge

Regals, *n. pl. Fr.* royalties

Regard, *n. Fr.* at regard of, with reſpect to, in compariſon of

Regne, *n. Fr.* a kingdom

Rehete, *v. Fr.* rehaiter, to revive, to cheer

Reheting, *n.* according to ſeveral mſſ. and all the reheting of his ſikes ſore; ſome mſſ. and moſt of the printed editions read richeſſe inſtead of reheting, Gloſſ. *Ur.* Richeſſe, though almoſt as aukward an expreſſion as the other, is more agreeable to the correſponding paſſage in the Filoſtrato—

E ſoſpir che gli avea a gran dovicia—

and one can hardly conceive that it could come from any hand but that of the author. I can make no ſenſe of reheting; but at the ſame time I muſt allow, that it is not likely to have been inſerted by way of a gloſs [orig.

Reile, *v. neut.* to roll; reileth diverſely; vogatur,

Reines. See Raines

Rejoie, *v. Fr.* to rejoice

Reke, *v. Sax.* to exhale

Reken, *v. Sax.* to reckon, to come to a reckoning

Rekes, *n. pl. Sax.* ricks (of corn)

Relaies, *n. pl. Fr.* freſh ſets of hounds, *Du.* 362

Releſe, *n. Sax.* what is left

Relees, *n. Fr.* releaſe

Religiouſite, *n. Fr.* perſons of a religious profeſſion, the clergy

Relike, *n. Fr.* a relic, relikes, *pl.*

Remenant, *n. Fr.* a remnant, a remaining part

Remes, *n. pl. Fr.* realms

Remiſſails, *n. pl. Fr.* orts, leavings

Remorde, *v. Fr.* to cauſe remorſe, to afflict

Remuable, *adj. Fr.* moveable, inconſtant

Remue, remewe, remeve, *v. Fr.* to remove, *Conf. Am.* 164. b.

Remued, *pa. t.*

Renably, *adv. Fr.* reaſonably

Renegate, *n. Fr.* an apoſtate from Chriſtianity

Reneie, *v. Fr.* to renounce, to abjure

Renges, *n. pl. Fr.* ranks, the ſteps of a ladder

Renne, *v. Sax.* to run, to rend

Renomée, *n. Fr.* renown

Renovelaunce, *n. Fr.* a renewing

Renovelle, *v. Fr.* to renew

Rent, *v. Sax.* to tear or rend

Repaire, *n. Fr.* reſort

Repaire, *v. Fr.* to return

Repentant, *part. pr. Fr.* repenting

Repreſe, repreve, *n. Fr.* reproof

Repreſſion, *n.* ſeems to be put for power of repreſſing [ſing

Requere, *v. Fr.* to require
Rere, *v. Sax.* to raiſe
Reſcous, *n. Fr.* reſcue
Reſcowe, *v. Fr.* to reſcue
Reſon, *n. Fr.* reaſon, proportion
Reſons, *n. pl. Fr.* diſcourſes
Reſpite, *n.* may perhaps be put for reſpect
Reſpiten, *inf. m. Fr.* to grant a reſpite, to excuſe
Reſport, *n.* is probably put for reſpect
Reſte, *n. Sax.* repoſe
Reſte, *v. Sax.* to repoſe, to ceaſe from labour
Retenue, *n. Fr.* retinue; at his retenue retained by him
Rethor, *n. Fr. Lat.* an orator or rhetorician
Reve, *n. Sax.* a ſteward or bailif
Reve, *v. Sax.* to take away
Revel, *n. Fr.* entertainment, properly during the night, ſport, feſtivity
Revelour, *n.* a reveller
Revelrie, *n.* pleaſure
Revers, *adj. Fr.* contrary
Reverſe, *v. Fr.* to overturn
Revert, *v. Fr.* to turn back
Reveſt, *v. Fr.* to clothe again
Rew, *n.* a row or line; on a rew, in a line; all by rew. See *A'row*
Rewake, *v. Sax.* to waken again
Reward, *n. Fr.* regard, reſpect; take reward of thin own value, have regard to thine own value; in reward of, in compariſon with. See Regard
Rewe, *v. Sax.* to have compaſſion, to ſuffer, to have cauſe to repent
Reyes, *n. pl.* dances in uſe among the Dutch. *Reye*, Belg. *Chorea celerior, chorea in longum ſeriem*, Kilian
Reyſed, "Les Gandois firent une *reyſe* ſur les "marches de Haynault, et dedans le pays pille- "rent, bruſlerent, et firent moult de maux." *Mem. de la March.* p. 384, where a note in the margin ſays, "*Reyſe* en bas Alemand," ſignify "un *voyage* ou *courſe*."
Ribaninges, *n. pl.* ſeems to ſignify borders
Ribaude, *n.* a poor labourer; but the word generally implies profligacy of manners, as well as meanneſs of condition. See *Du Cange* in v. *Ribaldus*
Ribaudrie, *n.* ribaldry, indecent words or actions
Ribibe, *n.* a ſort of muſical inſtrument
Ribible, *n.* a ſmall ribibe
Richard, *pr.* I have vindicated the character of this heroic prince from an aſperſion which was firſt caſt upon him, I find, by Mr. Rymer, in conſequence of a miſtaken conſtruction of a paſſage in Hoveden; I am tempted to add here the beginning of a poem which, having been compoſed after his death, by Anſelem Faydit, muſt ſtand clear of all ſuſpicion of having been either begged or bought

For chauſaes et tot lo maior dan,
El maior dol, las! q eu anc mais agues,
Et zo, don dei toz temps plaigner ploran,
M aven a dir en chantar et retraire,
De cel q era de valorz caps et paire.
Li reis valenz *Rizard*, reis dez Engles,
Es morz; ai Dens! cals perda et cals danz es!
Can eſtraing moz et qau greu per audir!
Ben a dur cor toz hom co po ſofrir.
Morz es li reis, et ſon paſſat mil an
Qanc tan pros hom no ſo ne nol vit res,
Ne ia mais hom non et del ſen ſenblant,
Tan larc, tan pros, tan ardit, tals donaire;
Q Alixandres lo reis, qe venqi Daire,
No cuit qe tan dones ni tan meſſes,
Ni an Charles ni Artus tan valgues,
Q a tot lo mon ſen fez, qi n vol ver dir,
Als us doptar et als altres grazir.
Mſ. Croſts, fol. 111.

Richeſſe, *n. Fr.* wealth, richeſſes, *pl.* riches
Riddeled, *part. pa.* plaited, Gloſſ. *Ur.*
Ridden, *part. pa.* of ride; he is ridden, they be ridden, he had ridden
Ride, *v. Sax.* he rideth him
Riding, *n.* probably a proceſſion
Riſe, rive, *v. Sax.* to thruſt through
Right, *n. Sax.* a right or due; at alle rightes, at all points
Right, *adj.* good, true
Right, *adv.* truly, rightly, exactly, completely; it is frequently joined to adjectives, as the adverbs well and full are, to augment their force
Rime, *n. Fr.* a compoſition in rhyme; hence the title of The rime of Sire Thopas. Rime-dogerel. See Dogerel
Rimeyed, *part. pa. Fr.* compoſed in rhyme or verſe
Rimpled, *part. pa. Sax.* wrinkled
Ring, *v. Sax.* to make to ſound, *v. neut.* to ſound
Riſe, *n. Sax.* ſmall twigs of trees or buſhes
Riſhe, *n. Sax.* a ruſh
Riſt, for riſeth
Rit, for rideth
Rivage. See Arivage
Rive, *v. neut. Sax.* to ſplit, to fall aſunder
Riveling, *part. pr. Sax.* wrinkling; *rumpelen*, Belg. *rugare*, Kilian
Roche, *n. Fr.* a rock; roches, *pl.*
Rode, *n. Sax.* the croſs; rode-beem; it is alſo called the rode-tree, from its being made of wood
Rode, *n. Sax.* complexion
Rody, *adj. Sax.* ruddy
Roſe, *pa. t.* of riſe; roſte ſhould probably be roſe
Rogge, *v. Sax.* to ſhake; roggyn or mevyn, *agito, Prompt. Parv.*
Roigne, *n. Fr.* a ſcab, mange
Roignous, *adj. Fr.* ſcabby, rough
Rokette, *n. Fr.* a looſe upper garment
Roking, *part. pr.* of rokke or rogge, *v. neut. Sax.* ſhaking, trembling; roggyn or waveryn, *vacillo, Prompt. Parv.*
Rombel, *n.* a rumbling noiſe, rumour
Rome, *v. Sax.* to walk about
Rondel, *n. Fr.* a rhyme or ſonnet which ends as it begins, *Cotgrave*
Rone, *pr. n.* Rouen in Normandy
Rone, *pa. t.* of rain, *v. Sax.* rained
Ropen, *part. pa.* of repe, *v. Sax.* reaped
Roſalgar, red arſenic, a preparation of orpiment *Chambers* in v. *Realgar*. It ſhould rather per-

hape have been written Ryſalgar, with mſſ. c.1, as the Latin name is *riſygallum*
Roſen, *adj.* roſy
Roſer, *s. Fr.* a roſebuſh
Roſe-red, *adj.* red as a roſe
Rote, *s. Sax.* a root
Rote, a root in aſtrology
Rote, *s.* a muſical inſtrument. See *Du Cange* in v. *Rotta*. Notker, who lived in the 10th century, ſays that it was the ancient *pſalterium*, but altered in its ſhape, with an additional number of ſtrings, *Schilter*, in v. *Rota*
Rote, *s. Fr.* practice; by rote, by heart, *par cœur*, *Cotg.*
Rote, *v Sax.* to rot
Roten, *part. pa.*
Rother, *s. Sax.* the rudder of a ſhip
Rought, for raught, *pa. t.* of recche
Rouke *v. Sax.* to lie cloſe; but now they rucken in her neſt *Compl. Jour.* 72.
Roule, *v. neut. Sax.* to roll, to run eaſily; where ſome copies have royle. See Reile
Roume, *s. Sax.* room, ſpace
Roume, *adj.* wide, ſpacious
Roumer, *comp. d.* wider
Rouncevall, *pr. n.*
Rouncie, *s. barb. Lat.* a common hackney horſe. See *Du Cange* in v. *Runcinus*
Roundel *s. Fr.* a ſort of ſong. See Rondel—a circular figure
Route, *s. Fr.* a company
Route, *v.* to aſſemble in a company
Route, *v. Fr.* to ſnore, to rear,
Routhe, *s. Sax.* compaſſion, the object of compaſſion
Routheles, *adj.* without compaſſion
Row, *s.* a line of writing. See Rew
Row, *adj. Sax.* rough,—he loked wel rowe
Rowne, *v. Sax.* to whiſper
Rubeus. See Puella
Rubins, *s. pl. Fr.* rubies
Rucking, *part. pr.* of rucke, or rouke, *v. Sax.* lying cloſe
Rudde, *s. Sax.* complexion. See Rode
Ruddock, *s. Sax.* a bird called robin red-breaſt
Rufus, *pr. n.* a Greek phyſician, of whoſe works ſome are extant. See *Fabric. Bibl. Gr.* l. iv. c. 3.
Ruggy, *adj.* rough
Ruſſel, *pr. n.* the fox is called Dan Ruſſel, from his red colour, I ſuppoſe

S.

Sachelles, *s. pl. Fr.* ſmall ſacks
Sacked freres, friars wearing a coarſe upper garment, called *ſaccus*, *Mat. Paris*, *ad. an.* 1257; "Eodem tempore novus ordo apparuit Londini "de quibuſdam fratribus ignotis et non præ"viſis, qui, quia *ſaccis* incedebant induti, *Fratres* "*Saccati* vocabantur."
Sacre, *s. Fr.* a ſacred ſolemnity
Sade, *adj. Sax.* grave, ſteady, ſorrowful, repentant
Sadly, *adv.* ſtedily, carefully; this meſſenger drank ſadly ale and wine; this meſſenger applied himſelf to drink, ale and wine
Sadneſs, *s.* gravity, ſteadineſs
Saffron, *v. Fr.* to tinge with ſaffron
Saie for ſeie, *pa. t.* of ſe *v. Sax.* ſaw
Saile, *v. Fr.* to aſſail
Sailours, *s. pl.* may mean dancers, from the *Lat. Fr.*; ſo in *Pierce Plough*, 68, for I can—neither ſaylen, ne ſaute, ne ſyng, to the gyterne: the lines which Chaucer has here tranſlated are not in the beſt edit. of the *Rom. de la Roſe*, Paris, 1735, but they are quoted by Junius, *Etym. Ling. Angl.* in v. *Timbeſtere*, from an edit. of 1529;

Apres y eut farces joyeuſes,
Et batelleurs et batelleuſes,
Qui de paſſe paſſe jouoyent.
Et en l'air ung baſſin ruoyent,
Puis le ſcavoyent bien recuillir
Sur ung doy, ſans point y faillir.

where it is plain that the author is ſpeaking of jugglers rather than dancers
Saine, for ſeine, *part. pa.* of ſe, *v. Sax.* ſeen
Saine, *ſr. n.* the river Seine
Salade, *s. Fr.* a ſort of armour for the breaſt
Salades, *s. pl. Fr.* ſallads of herbs
Salewe, ſalue, *v. Fr.* to ſalute
Saloed, *part. pa.*
Saluinges, *s. pl.* ſalutations
Samite, *s. Fr. Gr.* a rich ſilk. See *Du Cange* in v. *Examitus*
Sanguin, *adj. Fr.* of a blood-red colour
Sarliniſhe, ſhould perhaps be ſarſiniſhe, from the *Fr. ſarraſinois*, a ſort of fine ſilk uſed for veils. See *Du Cange* in v. *Saracenicum* and *Saracenum*. It is ſtill called ſarcenet
Sarpleres, *s. pl.* packages of a larger ſize than ſacks. See *Du Cange* in v. *Sarplerium*. *Surpilière*, *Fr.* a piece of canvas, &c. to wrap or pack up wares in. *Cotgrave*
Saten, *pa. t. pl.* of ſit, *v. Sax.*
Satalie, *pr. n.* the ancient Attalia
Save, *s. Lat.* the herb ſage
Sauf, *adj. Fr.* ſafe. See *Vouche*—ſaved or excepted
Saveté, *s. Fr.* ſafety
Saule, for ſoule
Savour, *v. neut. Fr.* to taſte, to reliſh
Savouring, *s. Fr.* the ſenſe of taſting
Savourous, *adj.* ſweet, pleaſant
Sauſefleme, a compoſition, of which two of the ingredients are brimſtone and quickſilver
Sautes, *s. pl. Fr.* aſſault
Sautrie, *s. Fr. Gr.* a muſical ſtring inſtrument. See Rote
Sawe, *s. Sax.* ſpeech, diſcourſe,——a proverb or wiſe ſaying
Say, for ſey, *pa. t.* of ſe, *v. Sax.* ſaw
Scall, *s. Sax.* a ſcale or ſcab
Scalled, *adj.* ſcabby, ſcurfy
Scantilone, *s. Fr.* a pattern, a ſcantling
Scarce, *adj. Fr.* ſparing, ſtingy
Scariot, *pr. n.* Judas Iſcariot

Scarmiche, *n. Fr.* a ſkirmiſh, a battle
Scathe, *n. Sax.* harm, damage
Scatheful, ſcathelicke, *adj* pernicious
Scatheles, *adj.* without harm
Sclaundre, *n. Fr.* ſlander
Sclendre, *adj.* ſlender
Scochons, *n. pl. Fr.* ſcutcheons of arms
Scolaie, *v. Fr.* to attend ſchool, to ſtudy
Script, *n. Fr.* a writing
Scriptures, *n. pl. Fr.* writings, books
Scriven-like, like a ſcrivener or writing-maſter; *comme une eſcriwain*
Seames, *n. pl. Sax.* ſeams *future*
Secree, *adj. Fr.* ſecret
Secreneſſe, *n.* privacy [rical,
Seculer, *adj. Fr.* of the laity, in oppoſition, to cle-
Sede, *v. Sax.* to produce ſeed
See, *n. Fr.* a ſeat, ſees, *pl.*
See, *v. Sax.* to ſee; God you ſee; God him ſee; may God keep you or him in his ſight; God you ſave and ſee; to look; on to ſee—to look on—that ye wolden ſometime friendly on me ſee; that ye would ſometimes look friendly on me
See, *n. Sax.* the ſee; the grete ſee. A learned friend has ſuggeſted to me, that the ſea on the coaſt of Paleſtine is called The Great Sea in the Bible, [See *Numb.* xxxiv. 6, 7, *Joſh* xv. 12,] which puts the meaning of the appellation in this paſſage out of all doubt.
Sege, *n. Fr.* a ſiege
Seie, ſey, *pa t.* of ſee, *v. Sax.* ſaw, *part. pa.* ſeen
Seignorie *n. Fr.* power
Sein, *part. pa.* of ſee, *v. Sax.* ſeen
Seinde, *part. pa.* of ſenge, *v. Sax.* ſinged
Seint, *n. Fr.* ceinct, a girdle
Seintuarie, *n. Fr.* ſanctuary
Seke, *v. Sax.* to ſeek
Seke, *adj. Sax.* ſick
Selden, *adv. Sax.* ſeldom, ſelden time
Sele, *n. Fr.* a ſeal, ſeles, *pl.*
Self, ſelve, *adj, Sax.* anſwering to the *Belg.* ſelf, the *Fr même*, the *Lat. ipſe*, and the *Gr. Αυτος*. With the article prefixed, it anſwers to the *Lat. idem* and the *Goth. ſama*, from whence our ſame; in the ſelve moment, in the ſame moment; in the ſelve place, in the ſame place.—Theſe two uſages of the *adj.* ſelf, when joined to a ſubſtantive, might be confirmed by the uniform practice of all our writers from the earlieſt times down to SHAKSPEARE, but as they are both now obſolete, I chooſe rather to take this opportunity of adding a few words, upon the uſage of the *adj.* ſelf, when joined to a pronoun, in which light only it appears to have been conſidered by Wallis, when he pronounced it a ſubſtantive, anſwering nearly to the Latin *perſona*.—Dr. Johnſon, in his Dictionary, has very rightly eſtabliſhed the primary ſignification of ſelf to be that of an adjective; but in its connexions with pronouns he ſeems rather inclined to ſuppoſe it a ſubſtantive; firſt, becauſe it is joined to poſſeſſive or adjective pronouns, as my, thy, her, &c.; and, ſecondly, becauſe it has a plural number, ſelves, contrary to the nature of the Engliſh adjective.—The latter reaſon, I think, cannot have much weight, when it is remembered that the uſe of ſelves, as the plural number of ſelf, has been introduced into our language ſince the time of Chaucer. Selven, which was originally the accuſative ca. ſing. of ſelf, is uſed by him indifferently in both numbers; I myſelven; ye yourſelven; he himſelven. The former reaſon alſo will loſe its force, if this ſhall be admitted, that in their combinations with ſelf, the pronouns my, thy, her, our, your, are not to be conſidered as poſſeſſive or adjective, but as the old oblique caſes of the perſonal pronouns, I, thou, ſhe, we, ye. According to this hypotheſis the uſe of theſe combinations, with reſpect to the pronouns, is almoſt always ſoleciſtical, but not more ſo than that of himſelf in the nominative caſe, which has long been authoriſed by conſtant cuſtom; and it is remarkable that a ſoleciſm of the ſame ſort has prevailed in the French language, in which *moi* and *toi*, the abl. caſes of *je* and *te*, when combined with *même*, are uſed as ungrammatically as our my and thy have juſt been ſuppoſed to be when combined with ſelf. *Je l' ai vu moi-même*, I have ſeen it myſelf; *tu le verras toi-même*, thou ſhalt ſee it thyſelf; and ſo in the accuſative caſe, *moi-même* is added emphatically to me, and *toi-même* to *te*.——It is probable, I think, that theſe departures from grammar in both languages have been made for the ſake of ſofter and more agreeable ſounds. *Je-même, me-même, tu-même*, and *te-même*, would certainly ſound much thinner and more languid than *moi-même* and *toi-même*; and myſelf, thyſelf, &c. are as clearly preferable, in point of pronunciation, to Iſelf, meſelf, thouſelf, theeſelf, &c. though not all, perhaps, in an equal degree. It ſhould be obſerved that itſelf, where a change of caſe in the pronoun would not have improved the ſound, has never undergone any alteration
Selle, *n. Fr.* celle, cell
Selle, ſor ſille, *n. Sax.* a door-ſill or threſhold
Selve, *adj.* See Self
Sely, *adj. Sax.* ſilly, ſimple, harmleſs
Selyneſſe, *n. Sax* happineſs
Semblable, *adj. Fr.* like
Semblaunt, *n. Fr.* ſeeming, appearance
Semeliche, ſemely, *adj. Sax* ſeemly, comely
Semelieſte, *ſuperl. d.*
Semelyhede, *n.* ſeemlineſs, comelineſs
Semiſoun, *n. Lat.* a low or broken tone
Semicope, *n* a half or ſhort cloak
Sen, ſene, *inf m.* of ſe, *part. pa.*
Send, for ſendeth [*Ium*
Sendall, *n* a thin ſilk. See *Du Cange* in v. *Cendatus*
Seneck, *pr. n.* Seneca the philoſopher
Senge, *v. Sax.* to ſinge
Senior, *pr. n.*
Sentence, *n. Fr.* ſenſe, meaning, judgment
Septe, *pr. n.* Ceuta, formerly Septa, in Africa, over-againſt Gibraltar
Sepulture, *n. Fr.* grave
Serapion, *pr. n.* Joannes Serapion, an Arabian phyſician of the 11th century, *Fabric. Bibl. Gr.* t. xiii. p. 299

Sere, *adj. Sax.* dry

Sergeant, *n. Fr.* a ſquire attendant upon a prince or nobleman, a ſergeant of the lawe. His name is derived from his having been originally a ſervant of the king in his law buſineſs, *ſervions ad legem*, juſt as *ſervions ad arma*. The king had formerly a ſergeant in every country. *Spelman* in v. *Servions*

Seri-, *n. Fr.* ſeries

Sermoning, *n. Fr.* preaching

Servage, *n. Fr.* ſervitude, ſlavery

Servand, *part. pr.* of ſerve, ſerving

Serve, *v. Fr.* to ſerve. to behave to

Set, for ſetteth; for ſette, *pa. t.*

Setewale, *n. Sax.* the herb valerian

Sethe, *v.* to boil

Sethe, for ſothed, *pa. t.*

Sette, *v. Sax.* to place, to put; ſetteth him doun, placeth himſelf on a ſeat; yet ſette I cas, yet I put the caſe, or ſuppoſe—to put a value on a thing, to rate; I n'olde ſette his ſorrow at a myte, I would not value his ſorrow—to ſette a man's cappe, to make a fool of him. Sette, *pa. t.*

Seurement, *n. Fr.* ſecurity, in a legal ſenſe

Seuretee, *n. Fr.* certainty, ſurety, in a legal ſenſe

Sewe, *v. Fr* to follow

Sewes, *n. pl. Fr.* diſhes

Seye. See Seie

Shadde, *pa. t.* of ſhede, *v. Sax.* fell in drops

Shadde, *pa. t.* of ſhade, *v. Sax.* ſhaded, covered with ſhade

Shadowy, *adj. Sax.* unſubſtantial

Shaft, *n. Sax.* an arrow

Shal, *auxil. v. Sax.* is uſed ſometimes with an ellipſis of the infinitive mood, which ought to follow it, beth ſwiche as I have ben to you and ſhal, *i. e.* ſhall be; firſt tell me whither I ſhal, *i. e.* ſhall go; yet all is don or ſhal, *i. e.* ſhall be done

Shale, *n. Sax.* a ſhell or huſk; but all n'is worthe a nutte ſhale

Shalmies, *n. pl.* ſhalms, muſical ſtring inſtruments, otherwiſe called pſalteries or ſautries. See Rote

Shame, *n. Sax.* ſhames dethe, a death of ſhame, a ſhameful death; to York he did him lede, ſchames dede to deie

Shamefaſt, *adj. Sax.* modeſt

Shape, *n. Sax.* form, figure

Shapelich, *adj. Sax.* fit, likely

Shapen, ſhape, *part. pa.* of ſhape, *v. Sax.* formed, figured, prepared

Shawe, *n. Sax.* a ſhade of trees, a grove

Shefe, *n. Sax.* a bundle; a ſheaf of arrows; ſheves, *pl.* of corn

Shefeld, *pr. n.* Sheffield in Yorkſhire

Sheld, *n. Sax.* a ſhield; ſheldes, *pl.* French crowns, called in *Fr. ecus*, from their having on one ſide the figure of a ſhield

Shemering, *n. Sax.* a glimmering

Shend, *v. Sax.* to ruin

Shendſhip, *n.* ruin, puniſhment

Shene, *adj. Sax.* bright, ſhining

Shent, *part. pa.* of ſhend

Shepen, *n. Sax.* a ſtable

Shere, *v. Sax.* to cut—to ſhave

Sherte, *n. Sax.* a ſhirt. I hadde lever than my ſherte; I would give my ſhirt, *i. e.* all that I have—It ſeems to mean the linen in which a new-born child is wrapped; that ſhapen was my dethe erſt than my ſherte.

> O fatel ſuſtren, whiche or any clothe
> Me ſhapen was, my deſtinee me ſponne—
>
> Sens firſt that day that ſhapen was my ſherte,
> Or by the fatal ſuſter had my dome.—

Alas! that I ne had brought her in my ſhert! it ſeems to be put for ſkirt, (or lap) which perhaps was the original word.

Shete, *v. Sax.* to ſhoot

Shetes, *n. pl. Sax.* ſheets

Shette, ſhet, *v. Sax.* to cloſe or ſhut. Shette, ſhet, *pa. t.* and *part.* ſo was hire herte ſhette in hire diſtreſſe, ſo was her heart overwhelmed with her diſtreſs

Shift; *v. Sax.* to divide

Shilde, ſhelde, *v. Sax.* to ſhield; God ſhilde! God ſhield or forbid

Shipman, *n. Sax.* a mariner, the maſter of a barge

Shiver, *n. Sax.* a ſmall ſlice

Shode, *n. Sax.* the hair of a man's head

Shode, *part. pa.* of ſhoe, *v. Sax.* ſhod, having ſhoeson

Shove, *pa. t.* of ſhove, *v. Sax.* puſhed

Shonde, *n. Sax.* harm

Shope, *pa. t.* of ſhape

Shore, *part. pa.* of ſhere

Short, *v. Sax.* to make ſhort

Shet, *part. pa.* of ſhette, ſhut

Shoter, *n. Sax.* a ſhooter. The yew tree is called ſhoter, becauſe bows are uſually made of it

Shottes, *n. pl. Sax.* arrows, darts, any thing that is ſhot

Shove, ſhowve, *v. Sax.* to puſh; ſhove, *part. pa.*

Shrewe, *v. Sax.* to curſe

Shrewe, *n. Sax.* an ill-tempered curſt man or woman; ſhrewes, *pl.*

Shrewed, *adj. Sax.* wicked; ſhrende folk

Shrewedneſſe, *n. Sax.* ill-nature

Shrift, *n. Sax.* confeſſion

Shriſte-faders, *n. pl. Sax.* father confeſſors

Shright, for ſhricheth, ſhrieketh

Shright, *pa. t.* of ſhrich, *v. Sax.* ſhrieked

Shrive, *v. Sax.* to make confeſſion

Shriven, *part. pa.* I have ben ſhriven this day of my curat; I have made my confeſſion this day to my curate

Shroude, *v. Sax.* to hide

Shulde, *pa. t.* of ſhal, ſhould; ſhulden, *pl.*

Shullen, ſhuln, ſhul, *ind. m. pr. t. pl.* of ſhal

Sibbe, *adj. Sax.* related, allied

Sie, for ſeie, ſaw

Sift, *v. Sax.* to ſhake in a ſieve

Sigh, for ſeie, ſaw

Sighte, *pa. t.* of ſike, ſighed

Signe, *v. Fr.* to appoint

Signifer, *n. Lat.* the zodiac

Significaunce, *n. Fr.* ſignification

Sike, *adj. Sax.* ſick: it ſometimes ſeems to be uſed as a noun, for ſickneſs

Sike, *v. Sax.* to ſigh

Sike, *n. Sax.* a ſigh, ſikes, *pl.*
Siker, *adj. Sax.* ſure
Sikerde, *part. pa.* of ſiker, *v. Sax.* aſſured
Sikerneſſe, *n.* ſecurity
Sikerly, *adv.* ſurely
Simpleſſe, *n. Fr.* ſimplicity
Sin, *adv. Sax. abbrev.* of ſithen, ſince
Sinamone, *n. Fr.* cinnamon
Sip, *n. Sax.* drink
Sipher, *n.* a cypher or figure of 0 in arithmetic; although a ſipher in augrim have no might in ſignification of itſelfe, yet he yeveth power in ſignification to other. There is another paſſage in *Du.* ver. 435—40, which ſeems to imply that in Chaucer's time the numerals commonly called Arabian had not been long in uſe in this country
Sire, *n. Fr.* Sieur, Seigneur, a reſpectful title given formerly to men of various deſcriptions, as well as to knights; Sire knight, Sire clerk, Sire monk, Sire man of lawe. It was ſo uſually given to prieſts that it has crept even into acts of parliament; *Rot. Parl.* 12 and 13 E. IV. n. 14. Sir James Thekenes preſte; 1. H. VII. p. 11, Sir Oliver Langton preſt; Sir Robert Nayleſthorp preſt. Hence a Sir John came to be a nickname for a prieſt. Sire is ſometimes put for perſonage; and melancholy that angry Sire.—Our Sire, our huſband, our goodman, as the French in their old familiar language uſe *notre Sire*
Sis, *n. Fr.* the caſt of ſix, the higheſt caſt upon a die
Sit, for ſitteth, it ſit me not to lie, it doth not become me to lie; it ſyt a kynge well to be chaſt. *Conf. Am.* 168. b.
Sithe, for ſithes, *n. pl. Sax.* times
Sithen, ſith, *adv. Sax.* ſince
Sithes, *n pl. Sax.* ſithes
Sitte, *v. Sax.* to ſit—to become, to ſuit with. See Sit
Sittand, *part. pr.*
Sitten, *part. pa.*
Skaffaut, *n. Fr.* a ſcaffold, a wooden tower
Skaffold, *n.* a ſcaffold or ſtage
Skie, *n. Sax.* a cloud
Skill, *n. Sax.* reaſon; ſkilles, *pl.*
Skilful, *adj.* reaſonable
Skinke, *v. Sax.* to pour out, to ſerve with drink
Skipte, *pa. t.* of ſkippe, *v. Sax.* leaped
Skogan, *pr. n.*
Skorcle, *v. Sax.* to ſcorch
Skrippe, *n. Fr.* eſcharpe, a ſcrip
Slacke, *adj. Sax.* ſlow
Slain, *part. pa.* of ſle
Slake, *v. Sax.* to appeaſe, to make ſlack
Slake, *v. neut.* to fail, to deſiſt
Slawe, *part. pa.* of ſle
Sle, *v. Sax* to kill, to ſlay
Sleer, *n. Sax.* a killer
Sleighly, *adv. Sax.* cunningly
Sleight, *n. Sax.* contrivance
Sleightes, *pl.* ſuche ſleightes as I ſhall you neven—ſo this line ſhould probably be written
Slep, *pr. t. pl.* of ſle, *inf. n.*
Slep, ſlepe, *pa. t.* of ſlepe, *v. Sax.* ſlept
Sletc, *n. Sax.* ſleet, a mixture of rain and ſnow
Slevoteſſe, *adj.* ſeems to ſignify idle, unprofitable, as it does ſtill in vulgar language
Slider, *adj. Sax* ſlippery
Sliding, *part. pr.* uncertain. *Lydg. Tra.* 99. b. ſliding fortune, *lubrica fortuna*, orig.
Slie, ſligh, *adj. Sax.* cunning
Slike, for ſwilke, *adj. Sax.* ſuch
Slit, for ſlideth
Slit, *v. Sax.* to cut through, to cleave
Sliver, *n. Sax.* a ſmall ſlice or piece
Slo, *v. Sax.* to ſlay
Slogardie, *n. Fr.* ſloth
Slomberinges, *n. pl. Sax.* ſlumberings
Sloppe, *n. Sax.* a ſort of breeches
Slow, *pa. t.* of ſlo, ſlew
Slowe, *n. Sax.* a moth. In the orig. *Fr. teigne.*
Sluggy, *adj. Sax.* ſluggiſh
Smaliſh, *adj. Sax.* diminutive of ſmale or ſmall
Smerte, *v. Sax.* to ſmart, to ſuffer pain
Smerte, ſeems to be uſed as an *adv.* ſmartly, Gloſſ. v. Forthought
Smit, for ſmiteth, *ind. m. 3d perſ. ſing.*
Smiteth, *imp. m. 2d perſ. pl.* ſmite ye
Smithe, *v. Sax.* to forge as a ſmith
Smitted, for ſmitten, *part. pa.* of ſmite
Smokles, *adj. Sax.* without a ſmock
Smoterlich, *adj.* means, I ſuppoſe, ſmutty, dirty; but the whole paſſage is obſcure
Snewe, *v. Sax.* to ſnow, to be in as great abundance as ſnow
Snibbe, *v. Sax.* to ſnub, to reprove
Snow-white, *adj. Sax.* white as ſnow
Soden, *adj. Sax.* ſudden
Soget, *n. Fr.* ſubject
Soigne, *n. Fr.* care
Sojour, *n. Fr.* ſtay, abode
Soken, *n. Sax.* toll
Sokingly, *adv.* ſuckingly, gently. See Souke.
Solas, *n. Fr.* mirth, ſport
Solein, *adj. Fr.* one, ſingle, ſullen
Solempne, *adj. Fr.* ſolemn
Solempnely, *adv.* ſolemnly
Soler hall, a ſolere window is uſed for the window of a loft or garret
Som, *adj. Sax.* ſome; this is all and ſom, this is the whole; all and ſome, one and all
Somdel, *adv. Sax.* ſomewhat, in ſome meaſure
Somer, *pr. n.* In the treatiſe on the Aſtrolabe, Ch. profeſſes to make uſe of the kalenders of the reverent clerkes frere John Somer and frere Nicholas Lenne. The kalendar of John Somer is extant in mſ. *Cotton, Veſp. E.* vii.; it is calculated for 140 years from 1367, the year of the birth of Richard II., and is ſaid in the introduction to have been publiſhed in 1380, at the inſtance of Joan mother to the king. The kalendar of Nicholas Lenne or Lyne, was calculated for 76 years from 1387. *Tanner* in v. *Nicolaus Linenſis.* The ſtory there quoted from Hakluit, of a voyage made by this Nicholas in 1360, *ad inſulas ſeptentrionales antehac Europæis incognitas*, and of a book written by him to deſcribe thoſe countries *a gradu 54 uſque ad polum*, is a mere fable, as appears from the very authorities which Hakluit has produced in ſupport of it.

Somme, lo! Troilus—came riding with his tenthe ſomme iſere; ſo this line ſtands in the edit., but a mſ. quoted in Gloſſ. *Ur.* inſtead of tenthe has X. and mſ. I. tenteth; perhaps the original reading was XX. With his twenty ſomme *iſere*, according to the Saxon mode of expreſſion, would ſignify together with ſome twenty of his attendants. See *Hickes Gramm. A. S.* p. 32, 3.

Somme, *n. Fr.* a ſum

Sommer, *n. Sax.* ſummer; a ſemmer game

Somone, ſomppe, *v. Lat.* to ſummon

Sompnour, *n.* an officer employed to ſummon delinquents to appear in eccleſiaſtical courts, now called an Apparitor

Sond, *n. Sax.* ſand [*Fr. ſonde*

Sond, *n.* ſeems to ſignify a ſounding line, from the

Sonde, *n. Sax* a meſſage, Goddes ſonde, what God has ſent, God's gift

Sone, *adv. Sax.* ſoon

Sone, *n. Sax.* a ſon; ſones, *pl.*

Sonken, *part. pa.* of ſink, *v. Sax.* ſunk

Sonne, *n. Sax.* the ſun

Sonnish, *adj. Sax.* like the ſun

Sooty, *adj. Sax.* ſoul with ſoot

Sop, *n. Fr.* a piece of bread dipped in any ſort of liquor; he toke a ſoppe. *Conf. Am.* 104

Sophime, *n. Fr. Gr.* a ſophiſm, a ſubtle fallacy

Sore, *v. Fr.* eſſorer, to ſoar

Sort, *n. Fr.* chance, deſtiny

Sorted, *pa. t.* of ſort, *v. Fr.* allotted

Sorwe, *n. Sax.* ſorrow

Sory, *adj. Sax.* ſorrowful; ſory grace, misfortune. See Grace and With

Sote, *n. Sax.* ſoot

Sote, ſwote, *adj. Sax.* ſweet

Sote, *n. Fr.* a fool

Soted, *part. pa. Fr.* fooled, beſotted

Sotel, *adj. Fr.* ſubtle, artfully contrived

Soth, *adj. Sax.* true, certain; ſother, *comp. d.*

Soth, ſothly, *adv.* truly

Sothe, *n. Sax.* truth

Sothfaſtneſſe, *n. Sax.* truth

Sotherne, *adj. Sax.* ſouthern

Sothneſs, *n. Sax.* truth, reality

Soth-ſaw, *n.* veracity, true ſaying

Soudan, *n.* a ſultan, any Mahometan ſovereign. See *D'Herbelot* in *v. Sothan.*

Soudanneſſe, *n.* the wife of a ſultan

Souded, *part. pa.* conſolidated, faſtened together. Sowde-metal, *conſolidum. Prompt. Parv.*

Soveraine, *adj. Fr.* excellent in a high degree

Soverainly, *adv.* above all

Souke, *v. Fr.* to ſuck

Souked, *part. pa.*

Souled, *part pa. Sax.* endued with a ſoul

Soun, *n. Fr.* ſound, noiſe

Sounde, *v. Sax.* to make ſound, to heal, *v. neut.* to grow ſound

Souhe, *v. Fr.* to ſound; as far as ſouneth into honeſtee, as far as is conſonant to honeſty, that ſouneth unto gentilleſſe of love, that is conſonant to gentleneſs of love

Sonning, *part. pr.*

Soupe, *v. Fr.* to ſup, to take the evening meal, ſoupen, *pl.*

Souper, *n.* ſupper, the evening meal

Souple, *adj. Fr.* ſupple, pliant

Sourde, *v. Fr.* to riſe

Sours, *n.* a riſe, a rapid aſcent, the ſource of a ſtream of water

Souter, *n. Lat.* a cobler

Sowe, *v. Lat.* to ſew; it was uſual, and indeed neceſſary, formerly to ſew letters when they were written upon parchment; but the practice continued long after the invention of paper

Sowe, *v. Sax.* to ſow [409

Sowers, *n. pl.* ſores, bucks in their fourth year, *Du.*

Span-newe, *adj.* ſeems to ſignify quite new, but why it does ſo I cannot pretend to ſay

Spanniſhing, *n. Fr. eſpanouiſſement*, the full blow of a flower

Spare, *v. Sax.* to refrain

Spareth, *imp. m. 2d perſ. pl.*

Sparande, *part. pr.* ſparing, niggardly

Sparhauk, *n. Sax.* a ſparrowhawk

Sparre, *n. Sax.* a wooden bar

Sparred, *part. pa.* barred, bolted

Sparthe, *n Sax* an ax or halberd. See *Du Cange* in *v. Sparth, Securis, Danica*

Speces, *n. pl. Fr.* ſorts or kinds

Spede, *v. Fr.* to diſpatch

Spedeful, *adj.* effectual

Spektakel, *n. Fr. Lat.* a ſpying-glaſs

Spell, *n. Sax.* ſport, play, tale, or hiſtory

Spence, *n. Fr.* deſpence, a ſtore-room for wine or victuals

Spere, *n. Fr.* a ſphere

Spere, *n. Sax.* a ſpear

Spered, ſperred, as ſparred

Sperme, *n. Fr. Gr.* ſeed

Spiced. I have ſince met with a paſſage in which ſpiced, applied to conſcience, ſeems to ſignify nice, ſcrupulous. Beaumont and Fletcher, *Mad Lover*, act iii. when Cleanthe offers a purſe the prieſteſs ſays,

> Fy! no corruption—
> *Cle.* Take it; it is yours:
> Be not ſo *ſpiced*: it is good gold,
> And goodneſs is no gall to the conſcience.

Spices, as Speces

Spille, *v. Sax.* to waſte, to throw away, to deſtroy, *v. n.* to periſh

Spire, *n.* a ſtake; a corruption probably of *ſpere, Sax.*

Spired, *Sax.* enquired

Spitous, *adj. Fr. diſpiteux*, angry, ſpightful

Spitouſly, *adv.* angrily

Splaie, *v. Fr. deſployer*, to unfold

Spone, *n. Sax.* a ſpoon

Sponne, *pa. t.* of ſpinne, *v. Sax.* ſpun

Spore, *n. Sax.* a ſpur

Sporne, *v. Sax.* to ſtrike the foot againſt any thing

Spouſaile, *n. Fr.* marriage

Spray, *n. Sax.* a twig or ſprig

Spreint, *part. pa.* of ſprenge, *v. Sax.* ſprinkled

Springolds, *n. pl. Fr. eſpringalle*, machines for caſting ſtones and arrows. See *Du Cange* in *v. Muſchetta*

Squames, *n.pl. Lat.* ſcales
Squaimous, ſqueamiſh
Squier, *n. Fr.* a ſquire
Squier, *v.* to attend as a ſquire
Squierie, *n.* a number of ſquires: and alle ther ſquierie; and of his ſquierie gentillemen auhtene
Stace, *pr. n.* Statius the Roman poet
Stacke, *n. Sax.* a ſtack of wood, &c.
Stacke, *pa. t.* of ſtick, *v. Sax.* ſtuck
Staff-ſling, means, I ſuppoſe, a ſling faſtened to a ſtaff. *Lyd. Tro.* 39, b. deſcribes David as armed

With a *ſtoffe ſlynge*, voyde of plate and mayle.

Staker, *v. Sax.* to ſtagger
Stalke, *v. Sax.* to ſtep ſlowly; full thefely gan he ſtalke; and to the bedde he ſtalketh ſtylle, *Conf. Am.* 32
Stalkes, *n. pl. Sax.* the upright pieces of a ladder
Stamen, ſtamin, *n. Fr. eſtamine*, a ſort of woollen cloth
Stant, for ſtandeth
Starſe, *pa. t.* of ſterve, died
Stark, *adj. Sax.* ſtiff, ſtout
Starlinges, *n. pl.* pence of ſterling money
Staunche, *v. Fr.* to ſtop, to ſatisfy
Stele, *n. Sax.* a handle
Stellifie, *v. Lat.* to make a ſtar
Stente, *v. Sax.* to ceaſe, to deſiſt
Stenten, *part. pa.*
Stepe, *adj.* ſeems to be uſed in the ſenſe of deep, ſo that eyen ſtepe may ſignify eyes ſunk deep in the head
Stere, *v. Sax.* to ſtir
Stere, *n. Sax.* a young bullock; a rudder
Stereles, *adj. Sax.* without a rudder
Stereſman, *n. Sax.* a pilot
Sterne, *n. Sax.* a rudder
Sterne, *adj. Sax.* fierce, cruel
Sterre, *n. Sax.* a ſtar
Stert, *n. Sax.* a leap; at a ſtert, immediately
Sterte, *pa. t.* of ſterte, *v. Sax.* leaped, eſcaped, ran away
Sterting, *part. pr.* leaping, nimbly
Stertling, as ſterting
Sterve, *v. Sax.* to die, to periſh
Steven, *n. Sax.* voice, ſound; a time of performing any action previouſly fixed by a meſſage, order, ſummons, &c.; at unſet ſteven, without any previous appointment; they ſetten ſteven, they appointed a time
Stewe, *n. Fr.* a ſmall pond for fiſh, a ſmall cloſet, ſtewes, *pl.* ſtews, baudyhouſes
Steye, *v. Sax.* to aſcend
Steyers, *n. pl. Sax.* ſtairs
Stibborne, *adj.* ſtubborn
Stike, *v. Sax.* to ſtick, pierce
Stile, *n. Sax.* a ſet of ſteps to paſs from one field to another; by ſtile and eke by ſtrete, every where in town and country
Stillatorie, *n. Fr.* a ſtill
Stille, *adj. Sax.* quiet
Stithe, *n. Sax.* an anvil
Stives, as Stewes
Stoble-goos, a gooſe fed on ſtubble grounds
Stocked, *part. pa.* confined
Stole, *n. Fr. Lat.* part of the eccleſiaſtical habit, worn about the neck. See *Du Cange* in v. *Stola* 2.
Stole, *n. Sax.* a ſtool
Stonden, *part. pa.* of ſtonde or ſtande, *v. Sax.* ſtood
Stont, for ſtondeth
Stopen, *part. pa.* of ſtepe, *v. Sax.* ſtepped, advanced
Store, *v. Fr.* to ſtock or furniſh
Store, *n.* any thing laid up for uſe; hence the phraſe to tell no ſtore of a thing, means to conſider it as of no uſe or importance
Storial, *adj. Fr.* hiſtorical, true
Storven, *pa. t. pl.* of ſterve
Stot, *n. Sax.* probably for ſtod, a ſtallion
Stote, *n.* a ſpecies of weaſel, a polecat
Stound, *n. Sax.* a moment, a ſhort ſpace of time, in a ſtound, on a ſudden; in ſtound, ſhould probably be in a ſtound: the orig. *Fr.* has *tantoſt*. Stounde, *pl.* times, ſeaſons
Stoundemele, *adv.* momentarily, every moment
Stoupen, ſhould probably be ſtopen.
Stoure, *n. Sax.* fight, battle
Strake, *v. Sax.* to proceed directly; ſtracken, ſtricken; tendere, *Kilian*
Strange, *adj. Fr.* foreign, uncommon; he made it ſtrange, he made it a matter of difficulty or nicety
Straughte, *pa. t.* of ſtreche, *v. Sax.* ſtretched, *Conf. Am.* 184
Stre, *n. Sax.* ſtraw
Streight, *part. pa.* of ſtrecche, *v. Sax.* ſtretched
Streine, *v. Fr.* to conſtrain, to preſs cloſely
Streite, *adj. Fr.* ſtraight; ſtreite ſwerd
Stremeden, *pa. t. pl.* of ſtreme, *v. Sax.* ſtreamed flowed
Stremes, *n. pl.* the rays of the ſun
Strene, *n. Sax.* ſtock, race, progeny
Strengeſt-faithed, *adj.* endowed with the ſtrongeſt faith
Strepe, *v. Fr.* to ſtrip
Strete, *n. Sax.* a ſtreet
Strike, *n. Sax.* a line, a ſtreak; a ſtrike of flax
Stripe, *v. Lat.* ſtirpe, race, kindred
Stripe, *v.* as Strope
Strode, *pr. n.* the philoſophical Strode, to whom, jointly with the moral Gower, Chaucer directs his Troilus, was probably Ralph Strode, of Merton-college, Oxford. A. Wood, who had made the antiquities of that college a particular object of his inquiries, ſays only of him, "*Radulphus* "*Strode*, de quo ſic vetus noſter catalogus. Poeta "fuit et verſificavit librum elegiacum vocat. "Phantaſma Rodulphi. Claruit 1370." Some of his logical works are ſaid to be extant in print, *Venet.* 1517, 4to. *Tanner* in v. *Strodeus.*
Strof, *pa. t.* of ſtrive, *v. Fr.* ſtrove, contended
Stronde, *n. Sax.* a ſhore
Strother, *pr. n.* a town in the north
Stroute, *v.* to ſtrut
Subarbes, *n. pl. Lat.* ſuburbs
Subfumigation, *n. Lat.* a ſpecies of charm by ſmoke
Subget, *adj. Fr. Lat.* ſubject
Sublimatorie, *n. Fr. Lat.* a veſſel uſed by chemiſts in ſublimation, *i. e.* ſeparating certain parts of a body, and driving them to the top of the veſſel in the form of a very fine powder

Subſtance, *n. Fr.* the material part of a thing
Suckipy, *n. Fr. ſoquenie*, a looſe frock worn over their other clothes by carters, &c.
Sue, *v. Fr.* to follow
Sueton, *pr. n* Suetonius the Roman hiſtorian
Suffiſance, *n. Fr.* ſufficiency, ſatisfaction
Suffiſant, *adj.* ſufficient
Sugred, *part. pa.* ſweetened as with ſugar
Supplie, *v. Fr.* to ſupplicate
Surcote, *n Fr.* an upper coat or kirtle
Surplis, *n. Fr.* a ſurplice
Surquedrie, *n. Fr.* preſumption, an over-weening conceit
Surrie, *pr. n.* Syria
Surſanure, *n. Fr.* a wound healed outwardly only
Surveance, *n. Fr.* ſuperintendance
Suſpect, *adj. Fr.* ſuſpected,
Suſpect, *n.* ſuſpicion
Suſpection, *n.* ſuſpicion
Suſter, *n. Sax.* ſiſter; ſuſtren, *pl.*
Swa, *adv. Sax.* ſo
Swale, *pa. t.* of ſwell, *v. Sax.* ſwelled
Swappe, *v. Sax.* to throw down—to ſtrike off—*v. neut.* to fall down
Swart, *adj. Sax.* black, of a dark colour
Swatte, *pa. t.* of ſwete, *v. Sax.* ſweated
Swegh, *n. Sax.* a violent motion
Swelt, *pa. t.*
Swelte, *v. Sax.* to die, to faint
Swerne, for ſweren, *pl. n.* of ſwere, *v. Sax.* ſwear
Sweven, *n. Sax.* a dream; ſwevenes, *pl.* it is written ſwevenis, for the ſake of the rhyme
Swiche, *adj. Sax.* corruption of ſwilke, ſuch
Swinke, *n. Sax.* labour
Swinke, *v.* to labour
Swire, *n. Sax.* the neck.; it is more commonly written ſwere
Swithe, *adv. Sax.* quickly, immediately
Swive, *v. Sax.* to perform the act of generation. See *Junii Etymolog.* in v.
Swoloue, *n. Sax.* a whirlpool
Swonken, *part. pa.* of ſwinkie
Swough, *n. Sax.* ſound, noiſe—a ſwoon

T.

Tabard. See the quotation from Speght's Gl. *Diſcourſe* &c. n. 6.
Tables, *n pl. Fr.* a game ſo called—Tables Toletanes, the aſtronomical tables compoſed by order of Alphonſo, X King of Caſtile, about the middle of the 13th century, were called ſometimes *Tabulæ Toletanæ*, from their being adapted to the city of Toledo
Taboure, *v. Fr.* to drum
Tache, *n. Fr.* a ſpot or blemiſh
Taillager, *n. Fr.* a collector of taxes
Taille, *n. Fr.* a tally, an account ſcored on a piece of wood
Take, *v. Sax.* to deliver a thing to another perſon
Take, for taken, *part. pa.*
Takel, *n. Sax.* an arrow
Tale, *v. Sax.* to tell ſtories; and namely when they talen longe *Conf. Am.* 27, b.
Tale, *n.* ſpeech, diſcourſe—reckoning, account; litel tale hath he told of any dreme; he made little account of any dream
Talent, *n. Fr.* deſire, affection
Taling, *n.* ſtory-telling
Tane, for taken
Tapes, *n pl. Sax.* bands of linen
Tapinage, *n. Fr. en tapinois*, lurking, ſculking about
Tapiſer, *n. Fr.* a maker of tapeſtry
Tapite. *v. Fr.* to cover with tapeſtry
Tappe, *n. Sax.* a tap or ſpigot which cloſes that orifice through which the liquor is drawn out of a veſſel
Tapſtere, *n. Sax.* a woman who has the care of the tap in a public houſe; that office formerly was uſually executed by women. See *The Adventure of the Pardoner and the Tapſtere*, in the *Continuation of The Cant. Tales*
Tare, *pa. t.* of tear, *v. Sax.* tore
Targe, *n. Fr.* a ſort of ſhield
Tars, *n* cloth of Tars, Tartarium, a ſort of ſilk. See *Du. Cange* in v. *Turſicus*, *Tartarinus*
Tas, *n. Fr.* a heap
Taſſeled, *part. pa.* adorned with taſſels
Taſte, *v. Fr.* to feel—to examine
Tatarwagges, *n. pl.* the orig. is—*toutes frotelées de crotes*, all bedaggled with dirt
Taverner, *n. Fr.* the keeper of a tavern
Taure, *pr. n.* the conſtellation Taurus
Tawe, *n. Sax.* tow
Teche, *v. Sax.* teach
Tein, *n.* ſeems to ſignify a narrow thin plate of metal, perhaps from the *Lat. Gr. tænia.*
Temps, *n. Fr.* time
Tene, *n. Sax.* grief, *Conf. Am.* 140
Tene, *v.* to grieve, to afflict
Tercelet, tercell, *n. Fr.* the male hawk, the male eagle
Terins, *n. pl.* a ſort of ſinging bird called in *Fr.* tarin. See *Cotgrave* in v.
Termagaunt, *pr. n.*
Terreſtre, *n Fr.* earthly
Tery, *adj. Sax.* full of tears
Teſteres, *n. pl. Fr.* headpieces
Teſtes, *n. pl. Lat.* veſſels for aſſaying metals
Teſtif, *adj. Fr.* headſtrong
Tetch, *n.* as Tache
Tewell, *n. Fr.* a pipe or funnel
Textuel, *adj. Fr.* ready at citing texts
Thacke, *n. Sax.* thatch
Thacke, *v.* to thump, to thwack
Than, *adv. Sax. quàm, Lat.*
Thank, *n. Sax.* thankfulneſs, good will; in thanke— is taken more—

En plus grant gré, ſont receus orig.

So the phraſes his thankes, hir thankes, anſwer to the French *ſon gré, leur gré*
Thanne, than, *adv. Sax.* then
Thar, *v. Sax. imperſ.* behoveth
Thatte, that, *prom. dem. Sax.* uſed as a relative; thatte Seint Peter had; ſo this verſe ſhould be

written—that he mighte, as much as he was able, *quod potuit.*—It is ſometimes put, not inelegantly, for the ſame, with gris, and that the meſt of the lond, of fiſh and fleſh, and that ſo plenteous; ſhall fall a rain, and that ſo wild wood

Thatte, that, *conj. Sax. quòd, Lat.*

The *prep. art. Sax.* The, when prefixed to adjectives or adverbs, in the *compar. deg.* is generally to be conſidered as a corruption of *by*, which was commonly put by the Saxons for *pam*, the *ablative ca. ſing.* of the *art. pat.* uſed as a pronoun. The merier, *eo lætius;* the more mery, *eo lætiores.* Of the ſame conſtruction are the phraſes—yet fare they the werſe, yet fare I bever the bét. When the is repeated with a ſecond *comparative*, either *adj.* or *adv.* the firſt the is to be underſtood in the ſenſe of the Lat. *quo.*—The more it brenneth the more it hath deſire—to conſume every thing—*quo magis—eò magis—*

> And ay the further that ſhe was in age
> The more trewe (if that it were poſſible)
> She was to him in love, and more peaible,

Sometimes the firſt the is omitted, as in the phraſes ever lenger the werſe; ever lenger the more; for certes if a man hadde a dedly wound, ever the lenger that he taried to wariſhe himſelf the more wold it corrupt—and alſo the wound wold be the werſe for to hele

The *v. Sax.* to thrive

Theodome, *n. Sax.* thriſt, ſucceſs

Thefely, *adj. Sax.* like a thief

Thennes, thenne, *adv. Sax.* thence

Thennesforth, *adv. Sax.* from thennesforth, from that time forward

Theodomas, *pr. n.*

Theophraſt, *pr. n.*

Ther, *adv. Sax.* there, in that place, is frequently uſed in the ſenſe of where

Ther, in compoſition, ſignifies that, without including any idea of place. See Here. Ther abouten, thereagain, therbeſorne, therby, therfore, therfro, thergaine, therof, theron, therto, therwith, therwithall

Thewes, *n. pl. Sax.* manners, qualities

Thider, *adv. Sax.* thither, to that place

Thiderward, *adv Sax.* toward that place

Thilke, *adj. Sax.* this ſame, that ſame

Thinke, *v. Sax.* to conſider; it is very frequently uſed as an impersonal in the *pr.* and *pa. t.* in the ſenſe of ſeemeth or ſemed; me thinketh, him thinketh, him thoughte, hir thoughte, how thinketh you? hem thoughte

Thinne, *adj. Sax.* ſlender, ſmall; a thinne imagination, *tenui imagine;* a thinne ſuſpicion, *tenui ſuſpicione*

Thirle, *v. Sax.* to pierce through

This, *pron. demonſt. Sax.* is ſometimes put for the prepoſitive article

Thiſe, *pl.*

Tho, *prep. art. pl.* da. *Sax.* uſed as a demonſtrative pronoun, thoſe

Tho, *adv. Sax.* then

Thole, *v. Sax.* to ſuffer, and what miſcheſe and male eaſe Chriſt for man tholed

Thore, is put for there, for the ſake of the rhyme

Thorpe, *n. Sax.* a village

Thoughten, *pa. t. pl.* of thinke, *v. Sax.*

Thrall, *n. Sax.* a ſlave or villain

Thralle, *v.* to enſlave

Thraſte, *pa. t.* of threſte

Thred-bare, *adj. Sax.* having the threads bare, the nap being worn away

Thremote, ſhould be written in two words, thre mote, as in the *Bodl.* mſſ. *Mot. s. Fr.* is explained by Cotgrave to ſignify, among other things, the note winded by a huntſman on his horn

Threpe, *v. Sax.* to call

Threſte, *v. Sax.* to thruſt

Threſwold, *n. Sax.* a threſhold

Threte, *v. Sax.* to threaten

Threttene, *num. Sax.* thirteen

Thridde, *adj. Sax.* third

Thrie, thries, *adv. Sax.* thrice

Thrilled, for thirled, *pa. t.* of thirle

Thringe, *v. Sax.* to thruſt

Thriſte, *pa. t.* of threſte

Thronge, *pa. t.* of thringe

Thropes, for thorpes

Throſtel, *n. Sax.* a thruſh

Throw, *n. Sax.* time; but a throw; but a little while; any throw, any ſpace of time; many a throw, many times

Thruſt, for thurſt, *n. Sax.* thirſt

Thruſty, for thurſty, *adj. Sax.* thirſty

Thurgh, *prep. Sax.* through, by means of

Thurghfare, *n. Sax.* a paſſage

Thurghout, *prep. Sax.* throughout, quite through

Thurrock, *n. Sax.* the hold of a ſhip

Thwitel, *n. Sax.* a whittle, *cultellus*

Thwitten, *part. pa.* chipped with a knife, whittled, *bien dolé*, orig.

Tidde, *part. pa.* of tide, *v. Sax.* happened; thee ſhulde never have tidde ſo faire a grace, ſo fair a fortune ſhould never have happened to thee

Tidiſe, *n.* the tidiſe is mentioned as an inconſtant bird in the *Leg. of G. W.* ver. 154; as doth the tidiſe for newfangleneſſe. Skinner ſuppoſes it to be the titmouſe

Tickel, *adj. Sax.* uncertain

Til, *prep. Sax.* to, hire till, to her.

Timbeſtere, *n.* is ſuppoſed by Lye, [*Etym. Ling. Angl.* in v.] to mean the ſame with tombeſtere. The orig. French has been quoted above in v. *Sailours*, which Chaucer has thus imitated;

> There was many a timbeſtere
> And ſailours, ſhat I dare well ſwere
> Ycouthe hir craft full parfitly.
> The timbres up full ſubtilly
> Thei caſten, and hent hem full oft
> Upon a finger faire and ſoft,
> That thei ne failed never mo.

According to this deſcription it ſhould rather ſeem that a timbeſtere was a woman, who plaid tricks with timbres, (baſons of ſome ſort

or other) by throwing them up into the air and catching them upon a ſingle finger; a kind of balance-miſtreſs.

Timbres, *n. pl. Fr.* baſons. See Timbeſtere

Tipet, *n. Sax.* a tippet

Tipped, *part. pa.* headed, covered at the tip or top

Tiptoon, *n. pl. Sax.* tiptoes, the extremities of the toes

Tire, *v. Fr.* to pluck, to ſeed upon in the manner of birds of prey; for loke how that a goſhauke tyreth

Tiſſue, *n. Fr.* a riband

Tite, for tideth happeneth

Titering, *n. Sax.* courtſhip

Titeles, *adj. Sax.* without title

Titus Livius, *pr. n.* the Roman hiſtorian

To, *adv. Sax.* too

To, *prep. Sax.* to day, on this day; to morwe, on the morrow, the following day; to yere, in this year.—To, in compoſition with verbs, is generally augmentative, the helmes they to-hewen and to-ſhrede, *i. e.* hewe and cut to pieces; the bones they to-breſte, *i. e.* break in pieces; to-broſten, to-daſhed, much bruiſed; to-rent, rent in pieces; to-ſwinke, labour greatly—Sometimes the *adv.* all is added; al-to-rent; all-to-ſhare; entirely cut to pieces; all-to-ſhent; entirely ruined.

Tofore, toforen, *prep. Sax.* before

Togithers, *adv. Sax.* together

Told, *pa. t.* of tell, *v. Sax.* accounted

Tombeſtere, *n. Sax.* a dancing woman

Tombeſteres, *pl.*

Tomedes, ſhould be written as two words; to mede or to medes, according to the Saxon uſage, ſignifies for reward, in return

Tone, *n. pl. Sax.* toes

Tonne-gret, *adj.* of the circumference of a tun

Toos, *n. pl.* as Tone

Toretes, *n. pl. Fr.* rings

Torne, *v. Fr.* to turn, the devil out of his ſkinne him torne! may the devil turn him inſide out!

Torned, *part. pa.*

Tortous, *adj. Fr.* oblique, winding

Toteler, *n.* a whiſperer, *totelar, ſuſurro, Prompt. Parv.*

Totty, *adj. Sax.* dizzy

Tough, *adj. Sax.* difficult; and maketh it full tough, and takes a great deal of pains; or make it tough, or take pains about it; and made it neither tough ne queint; made no difficulty, or ſtrangeneſs;

> Al be it ye make it never ſa tewche,
> To me your labour is in vane.
> MS. *Maitland, The Mourning Maiden.*

> Will. Swane makis wonder tewche
> *Ibid. Pebis to the play.* ſt. 21.

Tought, *adj. Sax.* tight

Tour, *n. Fr.* a tower

Tourret, *n.* ſhould be written tourette, as in mſſ. Hunter, a turret or ſmall tower

Tout, *n.* the backſide

Towail, *n. Fr.* a towel

Towardes, *prep. Sax.* toward

Towel, *n.* is perhaps put for tewel, a pipe, the fundament

Trace, *n. Fr.* a track or path—a train

Trade, *pa. t.* of tread, *v. Sax.* trod

Tragetour, *n.* as Tregetour

Traie, *v. Fr.* to betray

Trais, *n. pl. Fr.* traits, the traces by which horſes draw

Tramiſſene, *pr. n.* a kingdom in Africa

Tranſmewe, *v. Fr.* to tranform

Trappures, *n. pl. barb. Lat.* the clothes with which horſes were covered for parade. See *Du Cange* in v. *Trappatura*

Traſhed, *part. pa.* betrayed

Trate, *n.* Bp. Douglas frequently uſes trat for an old woman, *Æn.* vii. 416, *involutus ſeſe transformat aniles*——he renders—and hir in ſchape transformyt of ane trat

Trave, *n. Fr.* travail, a frame in which farriers put unruly horſes

Tre, *n. Sax.* a tree, wood, Criſtes tre, the croſs

Trechour, *n. Fr.* a cheat

Trede-foule, *n.* a treader of hens, a cock

Tregetour, *n.* a juggler

Trenchant, *part. pr. Fr.* cutting

Trental, *n. Fr.* was a ſervice of 30 maſſes, which were uſually celebrated upon as many different days, for the dead. *Du Cange* in v. *Trentale*

Trepeget, *n. Fr.* a military engine. See *Du Cange* in v. *Trebuchetum*

Treſſe, *n. Fr.* an artificial lock or gathering of hair. See *Du Cange*, in v. *Trica, Trecia*

Treſſed, *part. pa.* gathered in a treſs or treſſes

Treſſour, *n.* an inſtrument uſed in treſſing the hair, or an ornament of it when treſſed. See *Du Cange* in v. *Treſſorium*

Tretable, *adj. Fr.* tractable

Trete, *v. Fr.* to treat, to diſcourſe

Tretee, *n.* treaty

Tretis, *n.* treaty

Tretis, *adj. Fr.* long and well proportioned

Trewe, *n. Fr.* a truce

Trewe, *adj. Sax.* true faithful

True-love, *n.* Mr. Steevens has very obligingly ſuggeſted to me that there is a herb called true-love, according to Gerard, in his *Herbal*, edit. 1597, p. 328, *Herba Paris*; "One berrie or "herbe truelove—at the very top whereof "come forth fower leaves directly ſet one "againſt another, in manner of a Burgunnion "croſs, or a true love knot, for which cauſe "among the auncients it hath been called herbe "true-love" This herb, however, to the beſt of my remembrance, is rather too large to be carried conveniently under the tongue. A trew-love of the ſame or another ſort is mentioned in the concluding ſtanza of *The Court of Love*;

> Eke eche at other threw the floures bright,
> The primeroſe, the violete, and the gold;
> So than as I beheld the royal ſight
> My lady gan me ſodenly behold,
> And with a trewelove plited many a fold;

She ſmote me through the very heart as blive,
And Venus yet I thanke I am alive.

Triacle, *n. Fr.* corruption of theriaque, a remedy in general
Trice, *v. Sax.* to thruſt
Trie, *adj.* tried or refined, Gloſſ. *Ur.*
Trill; *v. Sax.* to twirl, to turn round
—— *v. neut.* to roll, to trickle
Trine, *adj. Fr.* triple; trine compas, the Trinity. See Compas.
Trippe; *n.* evidently means a ſmall piece of cheeſe; *les tripes d'un fagot*, in Fr. are the ſmalleſt ſticks in a faggot, *Cotgrave*
Triſte, *v.* for truſte
Triſte, *n.* a poſt or ſtation in hunting, *Cowell.*—This ſeems to be the true meaning of the word, though the etymology is not ſo clear
Trithpe, *n. Fr.* a trumpet
Trompour, *n.* a trumpeter
Tronchoun, *n. Fr.* a ſpear without a head
Tron, *n. Fr.* a throne
Trophee, *pr. n.* it occurred to me that the reference might poſſibly be to the original of the Troilus and Creſeide, which according to Lydgate was called Trophe, but I cannot find any ſuch paſſage as is here quoted in the Filoſtrato.
Trotúla, *pr. n.*
Trouble, *adj. Fr.* dark, gloomy.
Troubler, *comp. d.*
Trowandiſe, for Truandiſe
Trowe, *v. Sax* to believe
Truandiſe, *n. Fr.* begging, truanding
Tulle, *v. Sax.* to allure
Tullius, *pr. n.* M. Tullius Cicero
Turkeis, *n. Fr.* a ſort of precious ſtone
Turkeis, *adj. Fr.* Turkiſh
Turmentiſe, *n. Fr.* torment
Turves, *pl.* of turf, *n. Sax.*
Twaine, tway, twey, tweine, *numer. Sax.* two
Tweifold, *adj. Sax.* double
Twies, *adv. Sax.* twice
Twight, *pa. t.* & *part.* of twitch, *v. Sax.* pulled, plucked
Twinne, *v. Sax.* to depart from a place or thing
Twinned, *part. pa.* ſeparated
Twire, *v.* twireth ſeems to be the tranſlation of *ſufurrat*, ſpoken of a bird
Twiſt, *n. Sax.* a twig
Twiſte, *v. Sax.* to twitch, to pull hard
Twiſte, *pa. t.* twitched

V.

Valence, *pr. n.* Valencia in Spain, Gloſſ. *Ur.*
Valerie, *pr. n.*
Valerie, Valerius, *pr. n.* Valerius Maximus
Valure, *n. Fr.* value
Varien, *inf. n. v. Fr.* to change, to alter
Varien, variaunt, *part. pr.* changeable
Vaſſalage, *n. Fr.* valour, courage
Vavaſour, *n.* probably a meddling landlord
Vauntour, *n. Fr.* a boaſter
Vecke, *n. Ital.* an old woman
Veine-blode, *n.* blood drawn from a vein
Vendable, *n. Fr.* to be ſold
Venerie, *n. Fr.* hunting
Venge, *v. Fr.* to revenge
Venime, *n. Fr.* poiſon, venom
Ventouſing, *n. Fr.* cupping
Ver, *n. Lat.* the ſpring
Verament, *adv. Fr.* truly
Veray, *adj. Fr.* true
Verdegreſe, *n. Fr. verd de gris*, the ruſt of braſs, ſo called from its colour, a gray green
Verdite, *n. Fr.* judgment, ſentence
Verger, *n. Fr.* a garden
Vermeile, *adj. Fr.* of a vermilion colour
Vermelet, *adj.* as Vermeile
Vernage, a kind of wine
Vernicle, *n.* diminutive of *Veronike*, *Fr.* a copy in miniature of the picture of Chriſt, which is ſuppoſed to have been miraculouſly imprinted upon a handkerchief preſerved in the church of St. Peter at Rome, *Du Cange* in v. *Veronica. Matth. Paris. Angl.* p. 428. *Teſtam. Joh. de Nevill*, an. 1386. "Item Domino Archiepiſcopo Eborum "fratri meo, *i.* veſtimentum rubeum de velvet "cum le *Veronike* [r. *Verthike*] in gramis roſarum "deſuper *brondata*, [r. *brondata*."] It was uſed for perſons returning from pilgrimages to bring with them certain tokens of the ſeveral places which they had viſited, and therefore the Pardoner, who is juſt arrived from Rome, is repreſented with a vernicle ſewed upon his cappe. See *Pierce Plough*, 18, b.—

An hundred amples on hys hatte ſette,
Synges of Sinay and ſhelles of Calice*,
And many a crouch on his cloke and kayes of Rome,
The *Vernicle* before, for men ſhould knowe
And ſe by hys ſignes whom he ſought hadde.

Verniſh, *v. Fr.* to varniſh
Verre, *n. Fr.* glaſs
Verſifiour, *n Fr.* a maker of verſes, a poet
Vertules, *adj.* without efficacy
Vertuous, *adj Fr.* active, efficacious
Veſſell, *n. Fr. vaiſſelle*, plate
Ugly, *adj. Sax.* horrid, frightful
Viage, *n. Fr.* a journey by ſea or land
Vicary, *n. Lat.* a vicar
Vice, *n. Fr.* the newel or upright centre of a winding ſtaircaſe
Vigile, *n. Fr.* the eve of a feſtival, the wake or watching of a dead body
Vigilie, *n. Lat.* as Vigile
Vilanie, *n. Fr.* any thing unbecoming a gentleman
Vinolent, *adj. Lat.* full of wine
Virelaye, *n. Fr.* a round freeman's ſong, *Cotgrave.* There is a particular deſcription of a *virlai* in the *Jardin de Plaiſance*, fol. 12. where it makes the *decima ſexta ſpecies rhetorice Gallicane*
Virgile, *pr. n.*
Viſage, *v. Fr.* to front, to face a thing
Viſe, *n.* in mſ. *A. vene*; perhaps we ſhould read

* Mſſ. Gales. Perhaps it ſhould be Galice.

rose, a Saxon word signifying violence, impetuosity
Vitaille, *n. Fr.* victuals
Vitellon, *pr. n.*
Unbetide, *v. Sax.* to fail to happen
Unbodie, *v. Sax.* to leave the body
Unbokel, *v. Fr.* to unbuckle, to open
Unce, *n. Fr. Lat.* ounce
Uncommitted, *part. pa.* office uncommitted oft anoyeth
Unconning, *part. pr.* ignorant
Unconning, *n.* ignorance
Uncovenable, *adj.* inconvenient
Uncouple, *v.* to go loose, metaphor from hounds
Uncouplinge, *n.* letting loose, *Du.* 377
Uncouth, *part. pa.* unknown. See Couth—uncommon, not vulgar, elegant
Uncouthly, *adv.* uncommonly
Undepartable, *adj.* not capable of departing
Underfong, *v. Sax.* to undertake
Undergrowe, *part. pa.* undergrown, of a low stature
Underling, *n. Sax.* an inferior
Undermele, *n. Sax.* I am rather inclined to believe, that undermele signifies the time after the meal of dinner, the afternoon; *undermele postmeridies*, *Promp. Parv.*
Undern, *n. Sax.* the third hour of the artifical day, nine of the clock, till it was underne hygh and more, *Conf. Am.* 103, b.
Undernome, *pa. t.* of undermine, *v. Sax.* took up, received
Underpight, *pa. t.* See Pight; he dranke and wel his girded underpight, he drank and stuffed his girdle well
Underspore, *v. Sax.* to raise a thing by putting a spear or pole under it
Understonde, *part. pa.* understood
Undo, *v. Sax.* to unfold
Undoubtous, *adj.* undoubted; *indubitata*, orig. See Doutous
Uneschauble, *adj. Sax.* unavoidable; *inevitabili*, orig.
Unese, *n.* uneasiness
Un-eth, un-ethes, *adv. Sax.* scarcely, not easily
Unfamous, *adj.* unknown
Unfestliche, *adj.* not suitable to a feast
Ungodely, *adj.* uncivil, ungenteel; that I n'olde holde hire ungodely; orig. *que je ne tenisse à vilaine*
Ungreable, *adj.* unpleasant, disagreeable, *ingratas*, orig.
Unhele, *n. Sax.* misfortune
Unhide, *v.* to discover
Unjoine, *v.* to separate, to disjoin
Unkindely, *adv.* unnaturally
Unknowable, *adj.* incapable of being known; *ignorabiles*, orig.
Unletted, *part. pa.* undisturbed
Unloven, *v.* to cease loving
Unlust, *n.* dislike
Unmanhode, *n.* cowardice
Unmighty, *adj.* unable
Unperegal, *adj.* unequal, *impar*, orig.
Unpin, *v. Sax.* to unlock
Unpitous, *adj.* cruel; *impia*
Unplite, *v.* to unfold
Unrest, *n.* want of rest, uneasiness, trouble
Unresty, *adj.* unquiet
Unright, *n.* wrong
Unsad, *adj.* unsteady
Unscience, *n.* not science
Unsely, *adj.* unhappy
Unset, *part. pa.* not appointed
Unshette, *pa. t.* opened
Unskilfully, *adv. Sax.* without reason; *injuriâ*, orig.
Unslekked, *part. pa.* unslacked
Unslept, *part. pa.* having had no sleep
Unsoft, *adj.* hard
Unsolempne, *adj.* uncelebrated; *incelebris*, orig.
Unsperde, *part. pa.* unbolted
Unstancheable, *adj.* inexhaustable; *inexhausta*, orig.
Unstanched, *part. pa.* unsatisfied; *inexpletam*, orig.
Unsufficient, *adj.* insufficient
Unswell, *v.* to fall after swelling
Unthank, *n.* no thanks, ill will
Until, *prep. Sax.* to, unto
Untime, *n.* an unseasonable time
Unto, *adv. Sax.* until
Untreable, *adj.* not admitting any treaty, *bellum inexorabile*, orig. Πολεμος ακηρυκτος
Untressed, *part. pa.* not tied in a tress or tresses
Untriste, for untruste, *v.* to mistrust
Untrust, *n.* distrust
Unusage, *n.* want of usage; *insolentia*, orig.
Unware, *part. pa.* unforeseen
Unweld, *adj.* unwieldy
Unwemmed, *part. pa.* unspotted
Unweting, *part. pr.* not knowing; unweting of this Dorigen, Dorigen not knowing of this
Unwetingly, *adv.* ignorantly
Unwist, *part. pa.* unknown; unwist of him, it being unknown to him, not knowing
Unwit, *n.* want of wit
Unwote, *v. Sax.* to be ignorant
Unwrie, *v.* to uncover
Unyolden, *part. pa.* not having yielded
Voide, *v. Fr.* to remove, to quit, to make empty
Voide, *v. neut.* to depart, to go away
Voided, *part. pa.* removed
Volage, *adj. Fr.* light, giddy
Volatile, *n. Fr.* wild fowls, game
Volunie, *n. Fr.* will
Volupere, *n.* a woman's cap, a nightcap, *volypere*, *hercher*, *teristrum*, *Promp. Parv.* but *theristrum* signifies, properly, a veil. See *Du Cange* in v.
Vouche, *v. Fr.* vouchen sauf, to vouchsafe; voucheth sauf, vouchsafe ye; as ye have made present the king vouches it save
Up, *prep. Sax.* upon; ther lith on up my wombe and up my hed; there lieth one upon my belly and upon my head; up peine, upon pain; up peril, upon peril
Up, *adv. Sax.* up on lond, up in the country; up so doun, upside down; the londe was tourned up so doun, *Conf. Am.* 37, 159.—But Pandare up, an elliptical expression, of which it is not easy to give the precise meaning
Upper, *comp. d.* higher
Uphaf, *pa. t.* of upheve, *v. Sax.* heaved up
Upheping, *n. Sax.* accumulation; *cumulum*, orig.

Upon, *adv.* he had upon a courtepy of grene, he had on a courtepy, &c or perhaps it is an elliptical expreſſion for he had upon him

Upperest, *adj. ſuperl.* higheſt

Upright, *adj. Sax.* ſtraight; upright as a bolt, ſtraight as an arrow: it is applied indifferently to perſons lying as well as ſtanding

Urchon, *n.* a hedgehog

Ure, *n. Fr.* fortune, deſtiny

Ured, *adj.* fortunate; well ured

Uſage, *n. Fr.* experience, practice

Uſant, *part. pr. Fr.* uſing, accuſtomed

Utter, *comp. d.* of out, *adv. Sax.* outward, more out

Uttereſte, *ſuperl. d.* uttermoſt

Utterly, *adv. Fr. outrément*, thoroughly, entirely

Uttren, *inf. n.* of utter, *v. Sax.* to publiſh

Uttren, *pr. t. pl.* give out, ſell

W.

Wade, *pr. n.*

Wade, *v. Sax. Lat.* to paſs through water without ſwimming, to paſs generally

Waferere, *n. pl.* ſellers of wafers, a ſort of cakes

Wafoures, *n. pl.* wafers, a ſort of cakes

Waget. Upon the whole, I believe that a light waget ſhould be underſtood to mean a light blue colour

Waimenting, *n. Sax.* lamentation

Waine, *n. Sax.* a wagon

Watte, *v. Fr.* to watch

Wake, *v. Sax.* to watch

Walachie, *pr. n.* Walachia

Wala wa! or wa la wa! *interj. Sax.* wo! alas! wa la wa the while! alas the time!

Walnete, *n. Sax.* a walnut, *i. e.* a French or foreign nut

Walwe, *v. Sax.* to tumble about, to wallow

Walwing, *part. pr.*

Wan, *pa. t.* of win, *v. Sax.* gained

Wane, *v. Sax.* to decreaſe

Wang, *n. Sax.* a cheek-tooth

Wanger, *n. Sax.* a ſupport for the cheek, a pillow

Wanhope, *n. Sax.* deſpair

Wantruſt, *n. Sax.* diſtruſt

Waped, *part. pa. Sax.* ſtupified

Wardecorpe, *n. Fr.* body-guard

Wardein, *n. Fr.* a warden of a college, a guard, a keeper of a gate; wardeins, *pl.* guard, watchmen

Warderere, perhaps a corruption of the French *garde arriere*

Wardrope, *n. Fr. garderobe*, a houſe of office

Wasiangles. See *Cotgrave* in *v. Pic* and *Engoulé*, where he explains the wariangle to be a ſmall woodpecker, black and white of colour, and but half as big as the ordinary green one

Warice, wariſh, *v. Fr.* to heal; *v. neut.* to recover from ſickneſs

Wariſon, *n.* ſeems to be put for reward; *ſon merite*, orig. *wariſon, donativum, Prompt. Parv.*

Warne, *v. Sax.* to caution, to apprize, to refuſe

Warneſtore, *v.* to furniſh, to ſtore

Wasnie, *v. Sax.* to abuſe, to ſpeak evil of

Waſhen, *part. pa.* of waſh, *v. Sax.*

Waſtel-brede, cake-bread, bread made of the fineſt flour, from the French *gaſteau*, a cake

Waſtour, *n. Fr.* a ſpoiler

Wate, *v. Sax.* to know

Watering of Seint Thomas, a place for watering horſe, I ſuppoſe, a little out of the borough of Southwark, in the road to Canterbury. The ſame place, I apprehend, was afterwards called St. Thomas a Watering, probably from ſome chapel dedicated to that ſaint. It was a place of execution in Queen Elizabeth's time. *Wood, Ath. Oxon.* i. 229

Watlyngo-ſtrete, an old ſtreet in London

Wawe, *pa. t.* of weave, *v. Sax.* wove

Wawe, *n. Sax.* a wave

Way, *n. Sax.* is often put for the time in which a certain ſpace can be paſſed through; a furlong way, mile way, any ſhort time—at the leſte wey, ſeems to ſignify no more than at the leſt, at leaſt—a devil way, a twenty devil way

Way, *adv.* away; do way, do away, put away

Wayte, *v. Sax.* to weigh, to peiſe with weight

Webbe, *n. Sax.* a weaver

Wedde, *n. Sax.* a pawn or pledge; to wedde for a pawn; and leyde to wedde Normandie

Wede, *n. Sax.* clothing, apparel; under wede ſeems to ſignify, ſimply, in my clothing

Wede, *n. Sax.* a weed, an uſeleſs herb

Wehee, a word to expreſs the neighing of a horſe

Weive, *v. Sax.* to forſake, to decline, to refuſe

Weive, *v. neut.* to depart

Weived, *part. pa.* departed

Weke, *v. Sax.* to grow weak

Weke, *adj. Sax.* weak

Wel, *adv. Sax.* well, in a good condition; wel was the wenche with him mighte mete; wel were they that thider might twin: it is joined to other adverbs and adjectives, as full and right are, and ſtill more frequently to verbs, in the ſenſe of the French *bien*

Welde, *v. Sax.* to govern, to wield

Weldy, *adj. Sax.* active

Wele, *adv.* for weli

Wele, *n. Sax.* wealth, proſperity

Weleful, *adj.* productive of happineſs

Welefulneſs, *n. Sax.* happineſs

Welke, *pa. t.* of walk, *v. Sax.* walked

Welked, *part. pa.* of welke, *v. Sax.* withered, mouldy

Welkin, *n. Sax.* the ſky

Well, *n. Sax.* a ſpring

Welle, *v. Sax.* to flow as from a ſpring

Welmeth, ſeems to be put for welleth, ſpringeth

Welte, *pa. t.* of welde, governed wielded

Wel-thewed, *adj. Sax.* endowed with good qualities

Welwilly, *adj. Sax.* favourable, propitious

Wemme, *n. Sax.* a ſpot, a fault

Wenche, *n. Sax.* a young woman

Wend, for wened *pa. t.* of wene, thought, intended

Wende, *v. Sax.* to go

Wende, *n. Sax.* gueſs, conjecture, perhaps for wene

Wene, *n. Sax.* gueſs, ſuppoſition; withouten wene, not by ſuppoſition, certainly
Wene, *v. Sax.* to think, to ſuppoſe
Went, *part. pa.* of wende, gone
Wente, went, *pa. t.* of wende; went at borde, lived as a boarder
Went, *n.* a way, a paſſage, turn in walking; in bed
Went, for want
Wep, *pa. t.* of wepe, *v. Sax.* wept
Wepely, *adj. Sax.* cauſing tears
Wepen, *n. Sax.* a weapon
Werche, *n.* & *v.* as Werke
Were, for weren, *ind. m. pa. t. pl.* of am, *v. Sax.* it is ſometimes uſed for had, according to the *Fr.* cuſtom, with reflected verbs, *thiſe rioteures*—were ſet hem in a tavern for to drinke—*s'étoient mis, sétoient aſſis*
Were, *ſubj. m. pa. t. ſing.* e. g. as it were; if on of hem were; whether ſhe were; were it; it were a game
Were, *v. Sax.* to wear, to defend
Were, *n. Fr. guerre*, confuſion; his herte in ſuch a were is ſet, *ſon cueur a mys en tel* guerre; and in a were gan I wexe and with myſelf to diſpute
Were, *n. Sax.* for catching fiſh
Weren, *pa. t. pl.* of am. *v. Sax.* were
Werke, *n. Sax.* work; werkes *pl.*
Werke, *v. Sax.* to work
Werne, *v.* as Warne
Werre, *n. Fr.* war
Werrie, *v Fr.* to make war againſt
Werſe, *comp. d.* of ill, *adv. Sax.* worſe
Werſe, *comp. d.* of bad, *adj. Sax.* worſe
Werſte, *ſuperl. d.* of bad, worſt
Wery, *adj. Sax.* weary
Weſh, *pa. t.* of waſh, *v. Sax.* waſhed
Weſtren, *inf. m. v. Sax.* to tend toward the weſt
Wete, *adj. Sax.* wet
Wete, *v. Sax.* to wet
Wete, *v. Sax.* to know
Wether, *n. Sax.* the weather—a caſtrated ram
Weting, *n. Sax.* knowledge
Weve, *v. Sax.* to weave
Weve, *v. Sax.* to put off, to prevent. See Weive
Wex, *pa. t.* of waxe or wexe, *v. Sax.* waxed, grew
Wexing, *part. pr.* increaſing
Weyeden, *pa. t. pl.* weighed. See Waye
What, *pron interrog. Sax.* is often uſed by itſelf as a ſort of interjection; what!
What, *pron. indef.* ſomething, a little; what for love and for diſtreſs, partly for love and partly for diſtreſs; wete ye what? do ye know ſomething? ne elles what? nor any thing elſe—What, when joined to a *n. ſubſt.* (either expreſſed or underſtood) is a mere *adj.* anſwering to *qualis*, Lat. *quel*, Fr. what they weren, what men they were; what ſo, what that, whatſoever
Wheder, *conj. Sax.* whether
Whelm, *v. Sax.* to ſink, to depreſs
Whennes, *adv. Sax.* whence
Wher, *conj. Sax.* whether
Wher, *adv. Sax.* where
Wher, in compoſition, ſignifies which. See Here and Ther——Wherfore, wherin, wherthrough, wherwith, when uſed interrogatively, wherof, wherwith
Whether, *adj. Sax.* which of two
Whette, *part. pa.* of whet, *v. Sax.* ſharpened
Whiche, *pron. rel. Sax.* who, whom, *adj.* what, what ſort of
While, *n. Sax.* time; in this mene while, in the mean time; how he might quite hire while, how he might requite her time, pains, &c. God can ful wel your while quite
Whilere, *adv. Sax.* ſometime before
Whilke, *adj. Sax.* which
Whilom, *adv. Sax.* once, on a time
Whine, *v. Sax.* to utter a plaintive cry
White, *adj. Sax.* fair, ſpecious
White, *v.* to grow white
Who, *pron. interrog. Sax.*
Whos, *gen. ca. ſing.*
Who, *prón. rel. Sax.* it is generally expreſſed by that
Whos, *gen. ca. ſing.*
Who, *pron. indef.*

> For wel thou woſt the name as yet of her
> Amonges the people, as who ſayth halowed is

where as who ſayth ſeems to be equivalent to as one ſhould ſay: the ſame phraſe is ſometimes uſed to introduce a fuller explanation of a paſſage, as we might uſe—that is to ſay—who ſo, who that, whoſoever
Wide-where, *adv. Sax.* widely, far and near
Wierden, *n. pl. Sax.* the Fates or Deſtinies
Wif, *n. Sax.* a wife, a woman
Wifhood, *n. Sax.* the ſtate of a wife
Wiflcs, *adj. Sax.* unmarried
Wiſly, *adj. Sax.* becoming a wife
Wight, *n. Sax.* a perſon, male or female, a ſmall ſpace of time, weight, a witch; wytch cleped nyght mare
Wight, *adj. Sax.* active, ſwift; of hem that ben deliver and wight, *Conſ. Am.* 177, b.
Wighres, *n. pl.* witches
Wike, *n.* for weke
Wiket, *n. Fr.* a wicket
Wikke, *adj. Sax.* wicked
William St. Amour, a doctor of the Sorbonne in the 13th century, who took a principal part in the diſpute between the univerſity of Paris and the Dominican friars
Willy, *adj. Sax.* favourable
Wiln, for willen, *pl. n.* of wille, *v. Sax.*
Wilne, *v. Sax.* to deſire
Wimple, *n. Fr.* a covering for the neck; it is diſtinguiſhed from a veil, which covered the head alſo

> Wering a vaile inſtede of wimple,
> As nonnes don in hir abbey.

Windas, *n. Fr. guindal*, an engine to raiſe ſtones, &c.
Winde, *v. Sax.* to turn round
Winde, as Wende, to go
Winne, *v. Sax.* to gain, to attain

Wirry, *v. Sax.* to worry
Wis, *adv. Sax.* certainly. See Y-wis
Wise, *n. Sax.* manner
Wisly, *adv. Sax.* certainly
Wisse, *v. Sax.* to teach, to direct; so God me wisse, so may God direct me
Wiste, *pa. t.* of wisse, *v. Sax.* knew
Wite, *v. Sax.* to know, to blame, to impute to wite it the ale of Southwark, impute it to the ale of Southwark; or blame the ale of Southwark for it
Wite, *n. Sax.* blame
With, *prep. Sax.* is used in the sense of by; was with the leon frette, was devoured by the lion; in with his thought, in with hire bosom, within his thought, within her bosom; with meschance, with meschance and with misaventure, with sorwe and with meschance; with sorwe, are phrases of the same import as God yeve him meschance, God yeve me sorwe: they are all to be considered as parenthetical curses, used with more or less seriousness; and so are the following phrases, with evil prese, with harde grace, with sory grace
Withholde, *v. Sax.* to stop
Withholden, withhold, *part. pa.* retained, detained
Withsain, *inf. m.* of withsay, *v. Sax.*
Withsaye, withseye, *v.* to contradict, to deny
Witnesse, *n. Sax.* testimony, a witness
Witnesfully, *adj. Sax.* evidently
Witte, *n. Sax.* understanding, capacity—to my witte; in my judgment
Wittes, *n. pl. Sax.* the senses of man
Wive, *n.* for wif
Wivere, *n. Sax.* a serpent
Wlatsom, *adj. Sax.* loathsome
Wo, *n. Sax.* wo, sorrow—wo were us; wher me were wo, are expressions derived from the Saxon language, in which us and me were equivalent to *nobis* and *mihi*, without the addition of the *prep.* to
Wo, *adj. Sax.* sorrowful
Wo-begon, far gone in wo. See begon
Wode, wood, *adj. Sax.* mad, violent; for wode, like any thing mad
Wode, *v. Sax.* to grow mad
Wodewale, *fr. n.* of a bird
Wol, *v. auxil. Sax.* to will; it is used sometimes by itself, the *inf. v.* being understood, as she to water wolde, *i. e.* would dissolve into water; and to the wood he wol, *i. e.* will go, ful many a man hath he begiled er this, and wol. *i. e.* will beguile
Wolde, *pa. t.* would, wolden, *pa. t. subj. m.* wolde God! God wolde! o that God were willing! ne wolde God! God forbid!
Wold, *part. pa.* willed, been willing
Womanhede, *n.* womanhood, the virtue of a woman
Wonde, *v. Sax.* wandian, to desist through fear
Wonde, *pa. t.* may perhaps be deduced from winde, to turn, to bend,

> The yerde is bet that bowen wol and winde
> Than that that bresh.

Wonde, *pa. t.* of wone, dwelled
Wonder, *adj. Sax.* custom, usage, habitation, a heap, an assembly
Wone, *v. Sax.* to dwell
Woneden, *pa. t. pl.* dwelled
Woned, *part. pa.* wont, accustomed
Woning, *n. Sax.* a dwelling
Wonne, *part pa.* of winne, *v. Sax.* won, conquered, begotten
Wont, *part. pa.* of wone, accustomed
Wood, *adj.* as wode
Woodnes, *n.* madness
Wordles, *adj. Sax.* speechless
Worldes, *gen. ca.* of world, *n. Sax.* is used in the sense of the *adj.* worldly; every worldes sore; my worldes blis
Wort, *n. Sax.* a cabbage, new beer in a state of fermentation
Worth, *v. Sax.* to be, to go, wo worthe! unhappy be, or wo be to! to climb, to mount
Wost, for wotest, knowest
Wote, wot, *v. Sax.* to know, wot, *pa. t.* knew
Wowe, (rather woe) *v. Sax.* to woo
Woxe, *pa. t.* of waxe, or wexe, *v. Sax.* grew
Woxen, *part. pa.* grown
Wraie, *v. Sax.* to betray, discover
Wrathen, *inf. m. v. Sax.* to make angry
Wrawe, *adj. Sax.* peevish, angry; wrawe, froward, ungoodly
Wrawnes, *n.* peevishness
Wray, as wraie
Wreche, *n. Sax.* revenge
Wrenches, *n. pl. Sax.* frauds, stratagems
Wrest, *v. Sax.* to twist; the nightingale with so great might hire voice began out wrest—to turn forcibly
Wrethen, *part. pa.* of writhe—wrethen in fere, twisted together; in Urry's edit. it is printed —within in fere
Wreye, *v.* as wraie
Wrie, *v. Sax.* to cover, to turn, to incline
Wright, *n. Sax.* a workman
Wrine, for wrien, *inf. m.* of wrie [ture
Wring, *v. Sax.* to squeeze so as to express moisWrithe, *v. Sax.* to twist, to turn aside,
Writhing, *n.* a turning
Wronge, *part. pa.* of wring; his hondes wronge: later writers have used the same expression of distress
Wrote, *v. Sax.* to dig with the snout as swine do; or like a worm that wroteth in a tree
Wrought, *part. pa.* of worke, *v. Sax.* made

Y.

Y, at the beginning of many words, especially verbs and participles, is merely a corruption of the Saxon ge, which has remained uncorrupted in the other collateral branches of the Gothic language; what the power of it may have been originally, it is impossible, perhaps, now to determine: in Chaucer it does not appear to have any effect upon the sense of a word, so that there seems to be no necessity for inserting in a glossary such words as yblessed, ygranted, &c. which differ not in signification from blessed, granted, &c. Some, however, of this sort are

inſerted, which may ſerve at leaſt to ſhew more clearly the extent of this practice in Chaucer's time. Several other words are ſhortly explained under this letter, of which a more full explanation may be found under their reſpective ſecond letters

Ya, *adv. Sax.* yea; it is uſed emphatically with bòth; ya bothe yonge and olde; ye both faire and good

Yaf, *pa. t.* of yave, *v. Sax.* gave

Yalte, for yelte; yalte him, yieldeth himſelf

Yare, *adj. Sax.* ready

Yate, *n. Sax.* a gate

Yave, *pa. t.* of yeve, gave

Y-be, *part. pa.* been

Y-beried, *part. pa.* buried

Y-bete, *v. a.* to beat, ſtamp, imprint

Y-blent, *part. pa.* of blend, blinded

Y-blent, *part. pa.* of blenche, ſhrunk, ſtarted aſide

Y-blint, *part. pa.* blinded

Y-bore, *part. pa.* of bère, born, carried

Y-bourded, *part. pa.* jeſted

Y-brent, *part. pa.* of brenne, burned

Y-chaped, *part. pa.* furniſhed with chapes, from *chappe, Fr.*

Y-clouted, *part. pa.* wrapped in clouts or rags

Y-corven, *part. pa.* cut. See Corven

Y-coupled, *part. pa.*

Y-craſed, *part. pa.* broken

Y-deled, *part. pa.* diſtributed

Y-dight, *part. pa.* adorned

Y-do, *part. pa.* done, finiſhed

Y-drawe, *part. pa.* drawn

Ye, *adv. Sax.* as Ya; ye wis, yea certainly

Yeddinges, would ſeem to mean ſtory-telling

Yede, *part. pa.* of yede, *v. Sax.* went

Yefte, *n. Sax.* a gift; yeftes, *pl.*

Yelde, *v. Sax.* to yield, to give, to pay; God yelde you! God reward you!

Yelieden, *pa. t. pl.* of yelle, *v. Sax.*

Yelpe, *v. Sax.* to prate, to boaſt

Yelte, for yeldeth

Yeman, *n. Sax.* a ſervant of middling rank; a bailiff—Yemen, *pl.*

Yemanrie, *n.* the rank of yeoman

Yerde, *n. Sax.* a rod or ſtaff, ſod, earth

Yere, for yeres, *n. pl. Sax.* years

Yerne, *adj. Sax.* briſk, eager

Yerne, *adv.* briſkly, eagerly, early, ſoon, immediately

Yerne, *v.* to deſire, to ſeek eagerly

Yerning, *n.* activity, diligence

Yeten, *part. pa.* gotten

Yeve, *v. Sax.* to give

Yeven, yeve, *part. pa.* given

Y-falle, *part. pa.* fallen

Y-feined, *part. pa.* lordes heſtes may not bèn y-feined, the commands of ſovereigns may not be executed with a feigned pretended zeal, they muſt be executed ſtrictly and fully

Y-fette, *part. pa.* fetched

Y-fonden, *part. pa.* found

Y-foſtered, *part. pa.* educated

Y-freten, *part. pa.* devoured

Y-geten, *part. pa.* gotten

Y-gloſed, *part. pa.* flattered

Y-glued, *part. pa.* glewed, faſtened with glew

Y-go, *part. pa.* gone

Y-grave, *part. pa.* buried

Y-halowed, *part. pa.* kept holy

Y-herd, *part. pa.* covered with hair

Y-hold, *part. pa.* beholden

Y-japed, *part. pa.* tricked, deceived

Y-leſſed, *part. pa.* relieved. See Liſſed

Y-liche, y-like, *adj. Sax.* reſembling, equal

Y-liche, y-like, *adv. Sax.* equally, alike

Y-limed, *part. pa.* limed, caught as with birdlime

Y-logged, *part. pa.* lodged

Y-maſked, *part. pa.* maſhed or meſhed; *maſche*, Belg. *macula retis*, Kilian.

Y-meint, *part. pa.* mingled

Y-mell, *prep. Sax.* among

Ymeneus, *pr. n.* Hymenæus

Ynough, ynow, *adv. Sax.* enough

Yolden, *part. pa.* of yelde, given, yielded, repaid

Yonghede, *n. Sax.* youth

Yore, *adv. Sax.* of a long time, a little before; yore agon, long ago; in olde times yore, of time yore

Yove, *pa. t.* of yeve, gave

Youre, *pron. poſſ. Sax.* is uſed for youres

Youres, *pron. poſſ. Sax.* uſed generally when the noun to which it belongs is underſtood or placed before it; he was an old felaw of youres, he was an old companion of yours, *i. e.* of or among your companions

Youthhede, *n. Sax.* youth

Yoxe, *v. Sax.* to hiccough

Y-piked, *part. pa.* picked, ſpruce

Y-queint, *part. pa.* quenched

Y-reight, *pa. t.* reached

Y-reken, ſeems to be put for the old *part. pr.* y-rekend, reeking

Yren, *n. Sax.* iron

Y-rent, *part. pa.* torn

Y-ronne, y-ronnen, *part. pa.* run

Y-ſateled, *part. pa.* ſettled, eſtabliſhed

Yſe, *n. Sax.* ice

Y-ſerved, *part. pa.* treated

Y-ſette, *part. pa.* ſet, placed, appointed

Y-ſhent, *part. pa.* damaged

Y-ſhove, *part. pa.* puſhed forwards

Y-ſlawe, *part. pa.* ſlain

Y-ſope, *pr. n.* So the name of the fabuliſt was commonly written, notwithſtanding the diſtinction pointed out by the following technical verſe:

Yſopus eſt herba, ſed Æſopus dat bona verba

In this and many other paſſages which are quoted from Æſop, by writers of the middle ages, it is not eaſy to ſay what author they mean; the Greek collections of fables which are now current under the name of Æſop were unknown, I apprehend, in this part of the world at the time that Melibee was written: Phædrus too had diſappeared: Avienus indeed was very generally read. He is quoted as Æſop by John of Saliſbury, *Polycrat.* l. vii. *Ut Æſopo, vel Avieno, credas.*——But the name of Æſop was chiefly appropriated to

the anonymous * author of ſixty fables in elegiac metre, which are printed in Nevelet's collection under the title of *Anonymi Fabulæ Æſopicæ*. I have ſeen an edition of them in 1503 by Wynkyn de Worde, in which they are entitled ſimply *Æſopi Fabulæ*: the ſubjects are for the moſt part plainly taken from Phædrus; but it may be doubted whether the author copied from the orig. work of Phædrus or from ſome verſion of it into Latin proſe. Several verſions of this kind are ſtill extant in mſ.; one of very conſiderable antiquity has been publiſhed by Nilant, *Lugd. Bat.* 1709, under the title of *Fabulæ Antiquæ*, together with another of a later date, which is pretended to have been made from the Greek by an emperor Romulus, for the uſe of his ſon Tiberinus. They all ſhew evident marks of being derived from one common origin, like what has been obſerved of the ſeveral Greek collections of Æſopian fables in proſe; [*Differt. de Babrio.* Lond. 1776,] like them too they differ very much from one another in ſtyle, order of fables, and many little particulars; and, what is moſt material, each of them generally contains a few fables, either invented or ſtolen by its reſpective compiler, which are not to be found in the other collections, ſo that it is often impracticable to verify a quotation from Æſop in the writers of Chaucer's time, unleſs we happen to light upon the identical book of fables which the writer who quotes had before him.——I have printed in the *Diſcourſe*, &c. n. 29, a fable of The Cock and the Fox, from the Fr. Eſope of Marie, which is not to be found in any other collection that I have ſeen, and which I ſuppoſe furniſhed Chaucer with the ſubject of his Nonnes Preeſtes Tale. In the ſame Fr. Æſop, and in a Lat. mſ. *Bibl. Reg.* 15. *A.* vii. there is a fable which I think might have given the hint for Prior's Ladle. A country fellow one day laid hold of a faery, (*un folet, Fr.*) who in order to be ſet at liberty gave him three wiſhes. The man goes home and gives two of them to his wife. Soon after, as they are dining upon a chine of mutton, the wife feels a longing for the marrow, and not being able to get at it, ſhe wiſhes that her huſband had an iron beak (*long com li witecoc, Fr.* long as the woodcock) to extract this marrow for her: an excreſcence being immediately formed accordingly, the huſband angrily wiſhes it off from his own face upon his wife's.——And here the ſtory is unluckily defective in both copies; but it is eaſy to ſuppoſe that the third and laſt remaining wiſh was employed by the wife for her own relief.——A fable upon a ſimilar idea, in Fr. verſe, may be ſeen in mſ. *Bodl.* 1687, the ſame, as I apprehend, with one in the king's library at Paris, [mſ. n. 7989, fol. 189,] which is entitled *Les quatre ſouhaits S. Jean Martin*. See *Fabliaux*, &c. t. iii. p. 321. The vanity of human wiſhes is there expoſed with more pleaſantry than in the ſtory juſt cited, but, as it often happens, with much leſs decency

Y-ſowe, *part. pa.* ſown
Y-ſpreint, *part. pa.* ſprinkled
Y-ſticked, *part. pa.* ſticked, thruſt
Y-ſtorven *part. pa.* dead
Y-take, *part. pa.* taken
Y-teyed, *part. pa.* tied
Y-treſpaſed, *part. pa.* treſpaſſed
Y-vaniſhed, *part. pa.*
Yvel, *adj. Sax.* bad, unfortunate
Yvel, *adv. Sax.* ill
Yvoire, *n. Fr.* ivory
Y-wimpled, *part. pa.* covered with a wimple
Y-wis, *adv. Sax.* certainly
Y-wrake, *pa. t.* wreaked, revenged
Y-wrie, *part. pa.* covered

Z

Zeuxis, *pr. n.* a Grecian painter

* Several improbable conjectures, which have been made with reſpect to the real name and age of this writer, may be ſeen in the *Menagiana*, vol. i. p. 172, and in *Fabric. Bibl. Lat.* vol. i. p. 376, ed. *Patav.* In the edition of theſe fables in 1503 the commentator (of no great authority I confeſs) mentions an opinion of ſome people that *Galterus Angelicus fecit hunc librum ſub nomine Eſopi.* I ſuppoſe the perſon meant was Gualterus Anglicus, who had been tutor to William II. King of Sicily, and was Archbiſhop of Palermo about the year 1170. I cannot believe that they were much older than his time, and in the beginning of the next century they ſeem to be mentioned under the name of Æſopus among the books commonly read in ſchools, by Eberhardus Bethunienſis in his *Labyrinthus*, tract iii *de Verſificatione*, v. 11. See *Leyſer, Hiſt. Poet. Med. Ævi.* p. 826. About the middle of the ſame century (the 13th) Vincent of Beauvais, in his *Speculum Hiſtor.* l. iii. c. 2. gives an account of Æſop, and a large ſpecimen of his fables, *quas Romulus quidam de Græco in Latinum tranſtulit, et ad filium ſuum Tyberinum dirigit*; they are all, as I remember, in the printed Romulus.—Soon after the invention of printing, a larger collection of the fables of Æſop was made and publiſhed in Germany; it is divided into ſix books, to which is prefixed a life of *Æſop e Græco Latina per Rimicium facta*. The three firſt are compoſed of the ſixty elegiac fables of the metrical Æſopus, with a few trifling variations, and to each of them is ſubjoined a fable on the ſame ſubject in proſe from Romulus: book iv. contains the remaining fables of Romulus in proſe only. The fifth book has not more than one or two fables which had ever appeared before under the name of Æſop; the reſt are taken from the *Geſta Romanorum*, the *Calilabe Damnab*, and other obſcurer authors. The ſixth and laſt book contains ſeventeen fables with the following title, *Sequuntur fabule nove Eſopi ex tranſlatione Remicii.* There has been a great diverſity of opinion among learned men concerning this *Remicius* or *Rimicius*, (See *Præf. Milani.*) while ſome have confounded him with the fictitious Romulus, and others have confidered him as the editor of this collection. I have no doubt that the perſon meant is that *Rinucius* who tranſlated the life of Æſop by Planudes and ninety-ſix of his fables from the Greek into Latin, about the middle of the 15th century. (See *Fabric. Bibl. Med. Æt.* in v. *Rimicius.* In his tranſlation of the epiſtles of Hippocrates, mſ. *Harl.* 3527, he is ſtyled in one place *Verdenſis*, and in another *Caſilionenſis.*) All the fables from Remicius which compoſe this ſixth book, as well as the life of Æſop, which is profeſſedly taken from Rimicius, are to be found in this tranſlation by Rinucius. There is an edition of it printed at Milan about 1480, but it might very poſſibly have come into the hands of the German collector in mſ. ſome years ſooner, as the firſt tranſlations of Greek authors were eagerly ſought after and circulated through Europe at that time, when very few perſons were capable of reading the originals,

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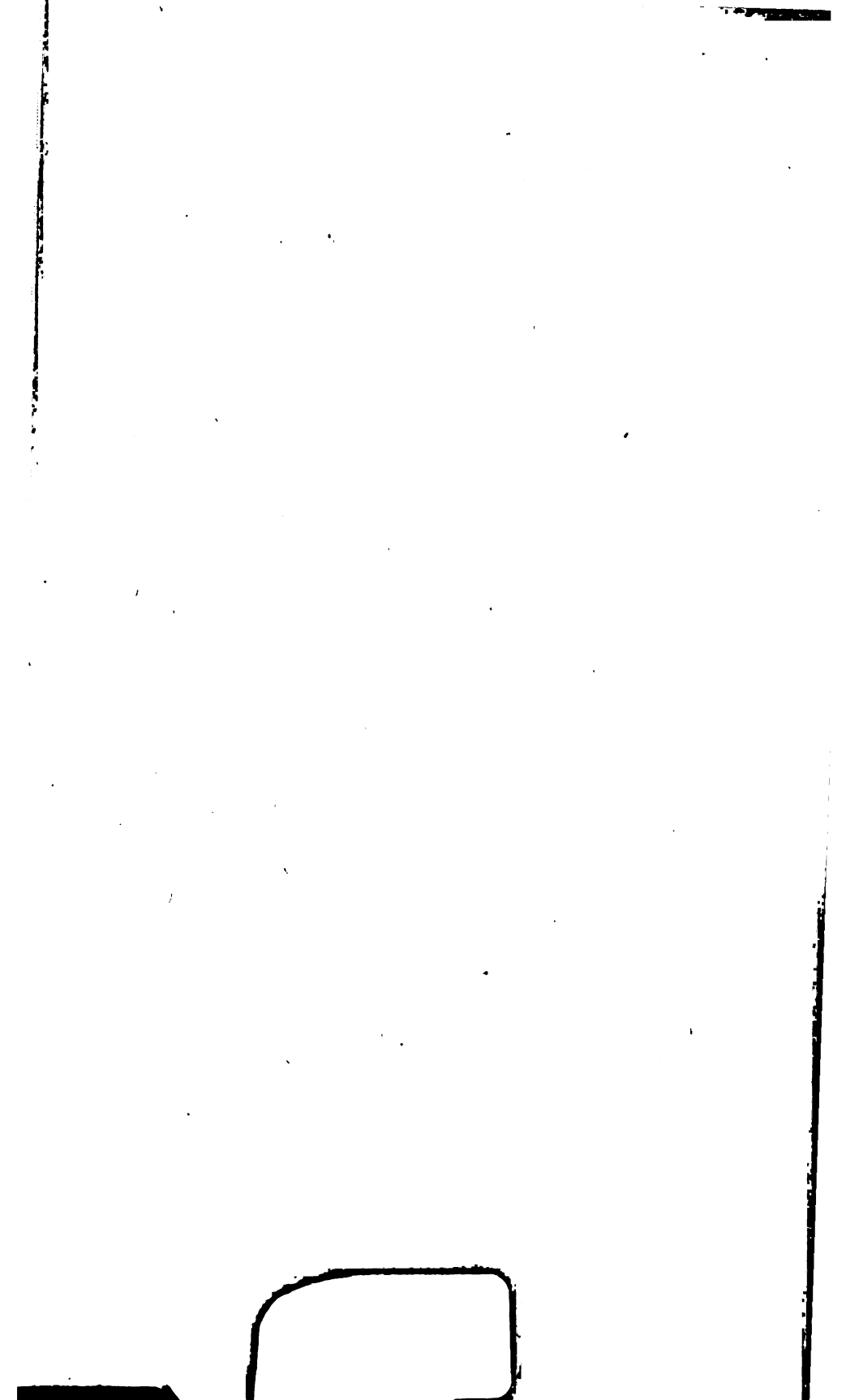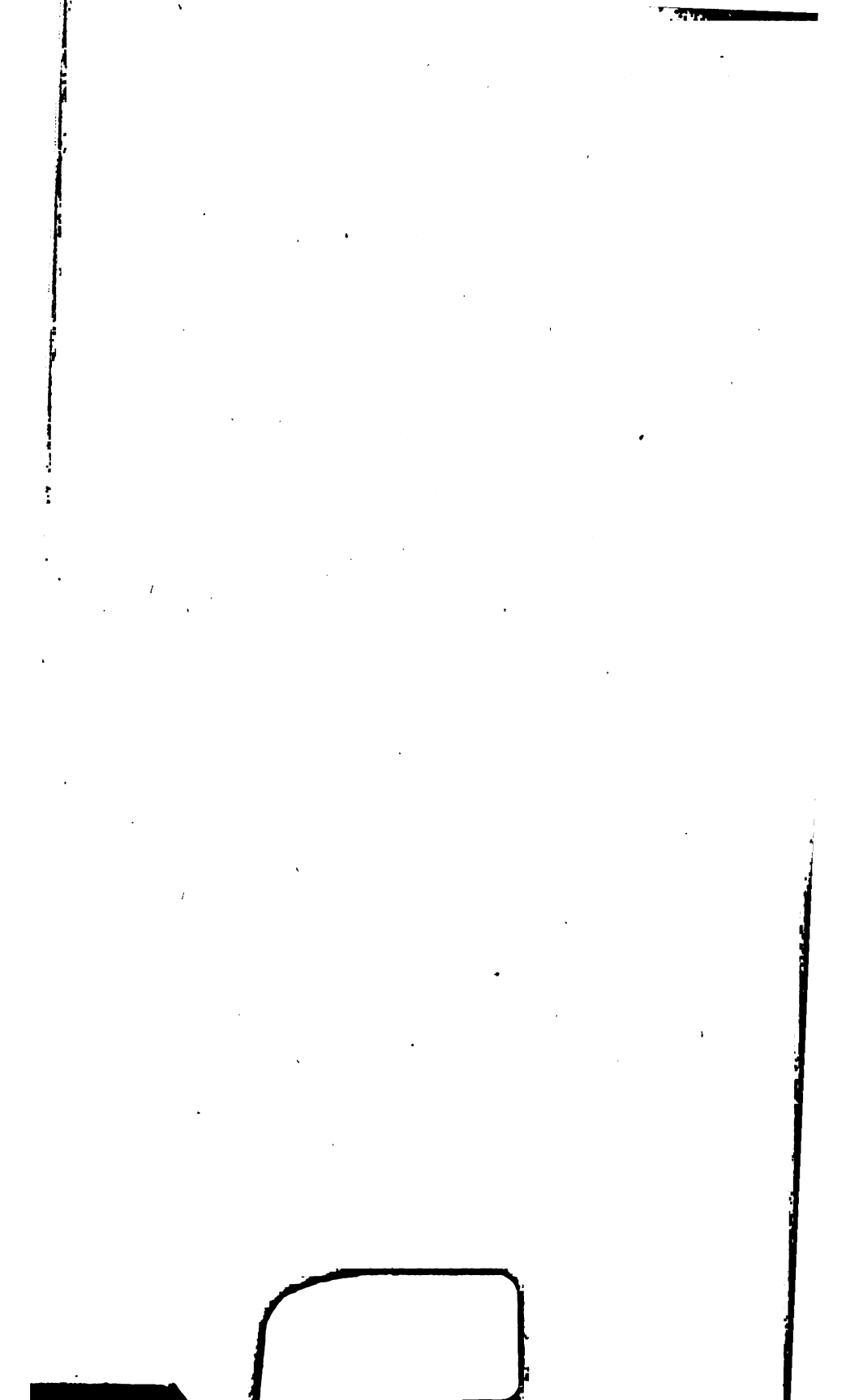
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